00035431

Digitized with financial assistance from

H T Parekh
FOUNDATION

An Initiative by
HDFC
WITH YOU, RIGHT THROUGH

on 27 November, 2018

THE LIFE AND TIMES

OF

CHARLES JAMES FOX.

VOLUME III.

00035431

THE

LIFE AND TIMES

OF

CHARLES JAMES FOX.

35431
ac

BY

EARL RUSSELL.

B. 2771.

VOLUME III.

TT. g. 8.

"*Et vitam impendere vero.*"

LONDON:
RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET,
Publisher in Ordinary to Her Majesty.
1866.

[*The Author reserves the right of Translation.*]

Cpcl
942.073
Rus/Lif
35431

Ref 923.242
Fox/Rus/Lif

PREFACE

TO

THE THIRD VOLUME.

SEVEN years have elapsed since the appearance of the second volume of the "Life of Fox;" but the interest of the subject has by no means decreased, and while I regret that I have not been able to treat it as it deserves, the importance of the period, from 1793 to 1806, appears to me to be such, that, among the materials for a future historian, a Whig view of Mr. Fox's career during that time ought to find a place.

Lord Stanhope has given to the world a very interesting "Life of Pitt," and has placed before us all that can be said in favour of the policy of that statesman, in no unfair or uncandid spirit towards his opponents.

Among other materials for history and biography, the following works may be mentioned:—

"Mémoires tirés des Papiers d'un Homme d'État," 13 volumes. This work is chiefly by Armand François d'Allonville, Count d'Allonville. He was, however, greatly assisted by M. Beauchamp and M. Schubert, who are said to have compiled, jointly or separately, volumes 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 10, of the series. It is also said that Beauchamp first thought of

the work. There can be no doubt, I believe, of the authenticity of the documents contained in these volumes. The statesman from whose collections these papers have been drawn, is supposed to be Prince Hardenberg.

"The Life and Opinions of Charles, second Earl Grey," in one volume, by Lieut.-Gen. Grey, is a work which contains many letters of Lord Grey, the intimate friend of Mr. Fox, his successor as the leader of the Whig party, and the great minister of the Reform Bill.

The "Memoirs of the Court and Cabinets of George III.," by the Duke of Buckingham, contain the valuable letters of Lord Grenville and Mr. Thomas Grenville, the one the able colleague of Pitt, the other the early and attached friend of Fox.

The "Diaries and Correspondence of the Earl of Malmesbury" give very fully the opinions of that masterly diplomatist. Lord Holland's "Memoirs of the Whig Party;" the "Journal and Correspondence of Lord Auckland;" the "Diary of the Right Hon. W. Windham;" the "Diaries and Correspondence of the Right Hon. George Rose;" "The Great War with France," by Lieut.-Gen. Sir Henry Bunbury; "Memoir of Sir Ralph Abercromby," by Lord Dunfermline; "Life of Sheridan," by Thomas Moore; "Life of Lord Sidmouth," by the Dean of Norwich; these and many other works throw a light upon the transactions in which so many men of the highest abilities, statesmen, orators, generals, and admirals, were engaged. All these volumes deserve to be studied by those who wish to form an opinion on the conduct of the English Government, and the

English Opposition, during the momentous wars of the French Revolution.

I have not mentioned the histories of Thiers, of Alison, and of Adolphus: they are well known. A work which has recently appeared, called "La Révolution," by Edgar Quinet, is well worthy of study. M. Quinet appears to me to have traced the succession of events, hitherto almost inexplicable, which occurred during the French Revolution, with great originality, and, in most cases, with very sound judgment.

R.

PEMBROKE LODGE,
October 8th, 1866.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

PAGE

POSITION OF PITT, AND CONDUCT OF THE WAR 1

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

POSITION OF FOX.—HOPELESSNESS OF OPPOSITION 6

CHAPTER XXXIX.

CONDUCT OF THE WAR, 1794 21

CHAPTER XL.

PRUSSIAN DEFECTION.—BRITISH SUBSIDIES 29

CHAPTER XLI.

MISSION OF LORD SPENCER AND MR. GRENVILLE TO VIENNA, 1794. 42

CHAPTER XLII.

BRITISH MILITARY AND NAVAL OPERATIONS, 1793-4 49

CHAPTER XLIII.

FINANCIAL MEASURES OF PITT 54

CHAPTER XLIV.

FOX'S LETTERS TO HIS NEPHEW.—HIS HAPPINESS IN PRIVATE LIFE.—HIS MARRIAGE 59

CHAPTER XLV.

TRIALS FOR HIGH TREASON.—TREASON AND SEDITION BILLS . . 80

CHAPTER XLVI.

PAGE
NEGOTIATIONS, 1795–6 87

CHAPTER XLVII.

SESSION OF PARLIAMENT, 1796 95

CHAPTER XLVIII.

EXPEDITION OF NAPOLEON BONAPARTE INTO ITALY.—HIS VICTORIES. —TREATY OF LEOBEN.—PEACE OF CAMPO FORMIO, 1796–7. . 100

CHAPTER XLIX.

NEGOTIATION AT LILLE, 1797. 104

CHAPTER L.

THE MUTINY OF THE FLEET 108

CHAPTER LI.

PERSONAL FEELINGS OF FOX.—MR. GREY'S MOTION ON REFORM OF PARLIAMENT.—SECESSION OF FOX AND HIS FRIENDS 112

CHAPTER LII.

DEATH AND CHARACTER OF BURKE, 1797. 122

CHAPTER LIII.

IRELAND, 1798. 127

CHAPTER LIV.

FOX'S MODE OF LIFE DURING THE SECESSION, 1797–1800 . . . 142

CHAPTER LV.

FOX'S SPEECH AT THE WHIG CLUB.—HIS NAME STRUCK OUT OF THE PRIVY COUNCIL 168

CHAPTER LVI.

PAGE
FOX'S MODE OF LIFE DURING THE SECESSION.—CONTINUED . . . 171

CHAPTER LVII.

WAR ON THE CONTINENT.—NAPOLEON'S OVERTURE.—DEBATE . . 193

CHAPTER LVIII.

RESIGNATION OF PITT.—HIS CHARACTER AS A MINISTER. 201

CHAPTER LIX.

ADDINGTON ADMINISTRATION.—MR. GREY'S MOTION ON THE STATE OF THE NATION 209

CHAPTER LX.

CONDUCT AND CORRESPONDENCE OF FOX FROM MR. GREY'S MOTION TO THE PEACE OF AMIENS, 1801.—PEACE OF AMIENS . . . 220

CHAPTER LXI.

DEATH OF THE DUKE OF BEDFORD 240

CHAPTER LXII.

UNEASY PERIOD BETWEEN THE CONCLUSION AND THE RUPTURE OF THE PEACE OF AMIENS.—CORRESPONDENCE OF PITT AND LORD CHATHAM, FOX AND GREY.—THE KING'S MESSAGE 264

CHAPTER LXIII.

RENEWAL OF THE WAR WITH FRANCE.—GREAT DEBATE.—1803 . 282

CHAPTER LXIV.

MR. POTTER'S MOTION.—FOX AT ST. ANNE'S HILL 305

CHAPTER LXV.

STATE OF PARTIES.—DISSOLUTION OF MR. ADDINGTON'S MINISTRY. —PITT FORMS A MINISTRY ON A NARROW BASIS 307

CHAPTER LXVI.

PAGE
WAR.—PLANS OF NAPOLEON.—VICTORY OF TRAFALGAR 337

CHAPTER LXVII.

PITT'S RENEWED POLICY OF COALITIONS.—TREATY OF PETERSBURG.—ULM, VIENNA, AUSTERLITZ.—TREATY OF PRESBURG . 342

CHAPTER LXVIII.

DOMESTIC POLITICS OF ENGLAND.—DECAY AND DEATH OF PITT . 347

CHAPTER LXIX.

FOX'S CONDUCT IN PITT'S LAST ILLNESS.—NEW MINISTRY.—THE ILLNESS AND DEATH OF FOX 368

CHAPTER LXX.

CHARACTER OF FOX.—SKETCH OF HISTORY OF EUROPE TILL 1814. 383

THE LIFE AND TIMES

OF

CHARLES JAMES FOX.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

POSITION OF PITT, AND CONDUCT OF THE WAR.

THE commencement of the year 1794 found Great Britain, in conjunction with Austria, Prussia, Germany, Spain, and Sardinia, at war with France. Holland had been forced from her neutrality, and constrained to join the Alliance by the menaces of England. Similar threats were applied to Switzerland; but, safe in her mountain bulwarks, she resisted them. The Empress of Russia shared nominally in the alliance against France, and uttered the loudest anti-Jacobin protestations; but, in reality, she directed all her energies to the conquest, subjugation, and partition of Poland.

Pitt having declined the office of a mediator, which he might have assumed with great credit and possibly with success, had indulged the animosities of the Tories of England, and of the Girondin party in France, by rushing impetuously into the war.

It is now to be seen how he conducted that great contest; with how much judgment he estimated the means and resources of the French Republic, with what foresight he

relied on the alliance of the Continental Powers, with what precision he pointed out the objects of the war, and with what vigour he directed the energies of the mighty empire whose resources he administered, to their attainment. In this task he was aided by the unbounded confidence of the Crown, and the steady support of the House of Commons. The King looked with horror on the Jacobins of France, and was ready to imitate the conduct of the Whigs of Queen Anne's time against the ancient rivals of England. In the House of Commons, Pitt could always call three hundred members to his standard, while Fox could scarcely muster fifty or sixty votes. The splendid genius of Burke, which had so often checked the pride of the Minister, now applauded his exertions, and inflamed the warlike temper of the nation.

Pitt's foresight had been signally deficient in the view which he took of the war of the German Powers, in 1792. He had considered the invasion of France as an enterprise in which England had no concern, and in his elaborate financial speech of that year, he had confidently predicted fifteen years of unbroken peace. He had been utterly blind to the obvious truth that, if the Allies should fail in their projected invasion, France would in her turn roll back the tide of conquest upon Belgium, and probably upon Holland and Germany. Neither had Pitt the sagacity to perceive that if the watchwords of Law and Order were powerful to move the sovereigns and nobles of Europe, the spells of Political Liberty and Social Equality would enchant the multitude with still greater effect. He was ignorant or heedless of the profound remark of Machiavel, that a nation invading another for the purpose of taking advantage of its internal disorders will, in all probability, be repelled with defeat and shame. Counting on the ordinary resources of a

regular finance and a well-disciplined army, he had no conception of the power of enthusiasm, or of the military talents which are brought into action in a nation forced to fight for its existence.

Let us now pass to consider the modes in which the war might have been conducted. The first was the favourite plan, or rather, perhaps, the favourite dream, of Burke. It was to found our great enterprise upon horror of the execution of Louis XVI., and to espouse the cause of the Bourbons till one of the two nations should be conquered or exhausted. In the eyes of Burke, the Duke of Brunswick was fighting the cause of the Crown of England in Champagne as much as the Duke of Cumberland had been at Culloden; it was, in his eyes, as much our interest to restore the Bourbons as it had formerly been not to restore the Stuarts. The first objection to this scheme was that, in principle, no nation has, according to international law, a right to prescribe the form of government of another. If, indeed, a civil war is in existence in any country, a foreign State may, if it chooses, adopt the cause either of the Government or of the insurgents. But, in France, no considerable party raised its head to contend with the Republican chiefs. The nobility of France, instead of fighting at Soissons or at Lyons, as the brave old cavaliers of England would have done, had swarmed off to Coblentz, and had become mendicants for foreign assistance. When there, they were treated with the neglect and contempt which are the natural and proper rewards of men who had allowed their sovereign to be put to death, and their friends to be murdered, and were now seeking the protection of a foreign invader. But was it necessary, as the British Government affirmed, to make war against the Republic of

France, because it was so violent and unjust a form of government that no relations of amity could be maintained with it? This ground likewise was of shifting sand. The monarchy had fallen in a domestic strife, and any attempt to restore it by foreign arms was sure to excite a wild and fanatical enthusiasm in favour of the Republic, and form the nation into a compact body of patriot defenders of their country. Prussia, Spain, and Tuscany soon made peace with the French Republic, and found it fully capable of maintaining the relations of amity.

A second method would have been to make war on France as an ambitious Power, with a view to diminish her territory, and give to her rivals an extended and more secure frontier. This is the plan against which Burke so vehemently and so justly protested.* It was sure, as he said, to combine every element of resistance in France; to rouse to the highest pitch the military spirit of a great nation; to make the present war exceedingly costly, and every future peace exceedingly precarious.

A third mode would have been to increase our navy, defend our coasts, attack the enemy's fleets, and deprive him of his resources, without sharing in any way the designs or the dangers of the Continental Powers. This was the true policy for Great Britain to pursue: she could not join in the attempt to impose a Government upon France without danger and disgrace: she could not send her armies into the field against the infuriated hordes of France without imminent risk of being overpowered by numbers, and driven to re-embark, discomfited and disheartened; but she might safely and wisely improve her armaments, defend herself against invasion, and await the progress of events. If the

* See vol. ii. of this work, c. 36. p. 370.

rulers of France should pursue their career of anarchy and massacre, it was obvious there would come an ebb-tide of opinion—a shrinking with disgust from the orgies of Jacobinism; and some chief of party or military commander would, in all probability, arise, and take advantage of returning sense and prevailing weariness to restore internal order and external peace. But if the vigour of the French nation should have led them to conquests over their neighbours, then, again, a remedy would be found in the alarm of independent nations, and a call for assistance would arise, which would give strength as a moral support, and a cause for sympathy or alliance on the part of other nations. This would have been a wise, an economical, and, in the end, probably a successful policy.

Pitt adopted none of these courses systematically; but by taking sometimes one and sometimes another, by favouring the adherents of the Bourbons at one time and fostering the ambition of Austria at another; by lavishing subsidies on unfaithful allies, and exciting hopes in the French Emigrants which it was out of his power to realize, he made it equally impossible to carry on successful war, and to obtain a safe and honourable peace. Thus, the policy of Pitt combined the disadvantages of every plan. By favouring Royalist expectations, he inflamed the fury of the French Republicans; by promoting plans of Austrian ambition, he disgusted Prussia and alarmed the patriotism of French Royalists; by capturing ships at Toulon for the English navy, he gave Spain an excuse for saying that the objects of England were entirely selfish, and that the war had no common purpose for which Spain was bound by interest or honour to contend.

But we shall see more fully the effects of Pitt's policy as we proceed.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

POSITION OF FOX.—HOPELESSNESS OF OPPOSITION.

Fox had been, since the day of his unfortunate coalition with Lord North, engaged in a series of ill-judged measures. His conduct on the India Bill, and his attempts to prevent the free exercise of the prerogative of dissolving Parliament had injured his political character, and broken up his party. His opposition to the French Commercial Treaty, and his violence on the question of the Regency, had tended still further to indispose the wise, and to alarm the suspicious.

But the time had now come when these errors were to be redeemed. The voice which had been so eloquent against the American War was raised again to oppose and to condemn a war still more unwise, and far more costly. Yet, in opposing this war of panic and of passion, Fox had to bear all the pain of separation from friends he dearly loved, and to become a mark for the arrows of bitter and fierce opponents. As Fox was of a character kind and amiable to the highest degree—"a man made to be loved," as Burke said of him at this very time—it was painful to him to separate from friends, and to be constantly subject to unjust attacks. Yet, while he felt this enmity deeply, he bore it patiently, and his glory shone all

the brighter for the martyrdom. Thus deserted, he was for a time disposed to abandon politics altogether.

The two following letters to Mr. Adair show the state of his mind upon foreign and domestic politics:

TO ROBERT ADAIR, ESQ.

"November 26th, 1792.

"DEAR ADAIR,—Notwithstanding the apparent good spirits you saw me in, the truth is, that what I saw and heard in London has made a most deep and painful impression on my mind; and I grow very doubtful about the possibility of preserving those connections which I love and esteem as much as ever, and without which I do not feel that I can ever act in political matters with any satisfaction to myself.

"My reason for writing to you upon this now is, that I have overheard you say to Sheridan that there was much disposition in what is called the aristocratic part of the party to concede and conciliate: and, though I confess this is totally contrary to my own observation, I cannot help catching at anything that gives me the least glimpse of hope. Perhaps you only said this to Sheridan in order to inspire him and others with similar dispositions to those which you described on the other side, and this I fear to be the case, for I must repeat that not one symptom of the kind has appeared to me. If any such disposition existed, I cannot help thinking that on the other side I should have weight enough to produce a correspondent disposition, if it did not exist without my interposition. I am sure that Lauderdale, Grey, and Sheridan, are all manageable men; and the rascals of the democratic party (for there are such on all sides) have not set their wits to pervert them in the way that those on the aristocratic side have to pervert the Duke of Portland,

Fitzwilliam, Windham, &c. Just as I was leaving town yesterday, I heard a report that Lord Loughborough had accepted the Great Seal, but I have reason to fear that it is not true. That event would open many eyes, and I should be full of hopes that the destruction of the Whigs was not irrevocably predestined. The circumstances of the times ought rather to excite you to go on with your plan than to deter you from it, if you have spirits for it.

"Yours ever,

"C. J. Fox."

TO THE SAME.

"November 29th, 1792.

"It is good not to despair, but I do assure you I am forced to use considerable exertion with myself to avoid it. I still am blind as to any disposition to what I call conciliation. The very word *forgive*, if it were mentioned, which I hope it never will, would put an end to all hopes of it. But what is worse than this is, that I do not see any express renunciation of the plan of suspending opposition for the purpose of giving strength to Government. This, with *me*, is the most real cause of separation of any that has been started, and this I know was mentioned, and not reprobated, before I came to town. It is given out to be the Duke of Portland's intention by Pitt and his friends, and sorry am I to say that, when I hear it, I have no authority to contradict it, though that was the point I laboured most hard for when I was in town. This point must be cleared up. Is the Duke of Portland ready to go on with the same sort of opposition we have been engaged in for years past? or is he not? I am *sure* the world thinks *not*, and I *believe* Ministers have reason to think not, though I do not believe the Duke of Portland ever authorized any assurances to them upon the subject.

Till this is cleared up, I must remain in the state in which I described myself to you; and, in such a state, it were no wonder if I did make continually these large strides which are complained of, though I am not conscious of having made any. . . .* I do not mention the proclamation, because that mischief is over and irreparable; but I cannot help wishing to know to what length they consider themselves bound to support the sort of measure to which it points. Is Lord Grenville's circular letter to be supported? Is every absurd prosecution Ministers institute to be supported? Am I to say that it is right to crush every paper that does not atone for its sins by gross libels upon myself, for instance? or is it possible that they are so blind as not to see that they are arming Pitt with a power to support his own libels, and to put a stop to all others? I mean they are doing this if they succeed; for I think the probability is that they will wholly fail, and that libels of all sorts will, if possible, increase. I must own, I think that in addition to their other means of influence, a monopoly of libels in the hands of a Minister who we know would not be scrupulous in the use of it would be rather too dangerous a power for wise men to give. I must finish now, or I shall be too late for dinner. Foreign politics to-morrow.

"Yours ever most sincerely.

"St. Anne's Hill. Thursday."

The following letter from Mr. Grenville is highly honourable to him, and also to Fox:

"Taplow, December 29th, 1793.

"DEAR CHARLES,—I sit down to write to you with an impression of greater uneasiness and anxiety than has ever yet

* For the part of this letter not here given, see vol. ii. p. 283.

belonged to any letter from me to you; that impression, too, is the more hopeless because it arises not out of any new event, or alteration of any opinions which I have been used to entertain, but out of a conviction daily increasing in my mind that the opinions which I hold are such as I cannot change, and yet are such as are likely to be most at variance with yours in very many of the most probable subjects of public business, perhaps in the greater part of those which are, at present, easy to be foreseen. The main points of difference between us are two; the one is respecting the war with France, which you condemn and oppose, while I think it is the greatest of all duties to support and maintain it to the utmost; the other respects an apprehension which I entertain of those principles and designs in this country adverse to the constitution of it, which makes me feel it to be my duty to resist whatever can give to such designs either strength, opportunity, or countenance; while you, on the other hand, believe in no such designs, and believe the danger to arise from there being too little spirit of free inquiry and resistance in the minds of the people of this country. Either of these subjects of difference existing between us would tell much in public conduct, but both united extend very widely indeed, and must in their direct course, or at least in their bearings and consequences, pervade almost all measures of public description. I do not write to go into the arguments on these questions—there is nothing new to be stated about them; nor to any detail of new measures which would seem to call for any explanation; and I have none in view, other than a more direct and manifest assertion of those opinions which the pressure of the time seems to make necessary, and which it would be neither manly, nor honourable, nor useful in me to disguise or suppress. If I write to you, then, at this moment, it is

rather to anticipate the pain which I am to feel out of this miserable shape of things, and, bad philosophy as it may be, to force both into your view and mine all this scene of uneasiness three weeks earlier than it need come. I have not been able to resist doing so. Perhaps, that it is so unpleasant to me to write this letter, has been the temptation to me to do so; if I have any other motive, it is only the honest one of making myself sure that you should know my thoughts and feelings to the same extent to which I know them myself; I know no other happiness in life than that of being persuaded I do right whatever may be the consequences, and sure I am that, in this instance, I need not tell you what it was to me to do so.

"Ever, my dear Charles,

"Very truly and affectionately yours,

"THOS. GRENVILLE."

In this letter of Mr. Grenville we see clearly stated the causes which broke up the Whig party. The differences of opinion which manifested themselves in 1793 were radical and irreconcileable: the one section opposed war with France and favoured Parliamentary Reform; the other section promoted the war, and dreaded any measures or any language which might give "strength and opportunity, or countenance," to designs hostile to the constitution. Fox, while opposing the war, was of opinion that the resistance by the Duke of Portland to Parliamentary Reform might be continued without a disruption of the party. But, whether this were possible or no, the mighty question of supporting or opposing the war with France was quite sufficient to snap asunder the strongest bonds which ever linked a party together.

In these circumstances the conduct of Burke's followers to Fox was manly and upright. Surveying the whole wide extent of the breach, they parted from their great leader with pain and reluctance. Some, like Mr. Grenville and Lord Fitzwilliam, while maintaining their resolve with firmness, preserved in their hearts the affection which Fox's loveable qualities were so well calculated to inspire.

The events which followed were not propitious to either section. Fox saw the war supported by immense majorities, and measures of coercion readily sanctioned both in England and in Ireland. Fitzwilliam and Windham were obliged to acquiesce in the total disregard of the ideas and plans of Burke; the French Royalists found little countenance to their cause in England, and were massacred in France; the Irish Catholics were goaded into rebellion, and treated as a conquered people. In 1803 the breach was repaired; Lord Spencer and Lord Fitzwilliam, Mr. Windham and Lord Minto, renewed their political connection with Fox; the Duke of Portland alone joined the Tory party, and never returned to his liberal opinions.

As Fox's sentiments and opinions on the French Revolution and the war of 1793, have been much misunderstood, it may be interesting to look back to the course of those sentiments and opinions as formed on the events of the day, and communicated in his letters to his dearest relations and most intimate friends.

At first, his views and his hopes were not very different from those entertained by the best among his countrymen, and by all the lovers of freedom throughout Europe. On the 26th of May, 1791, Fox writes thus to his nephew, Lord Holland: "I have not read Burke's new pamphlet, but hear a very different account of it from yours. It is, in

general, thought to be mere madness, and especially in those parts where he is for a general war, for the purpose of destroying the present Government of France. There is a pamphlet by one Macintosh, which I hear a great character of, though it is said to go too far in some respects; but I have not yet had time to read it."*

Lord Holland, in a letter to Fox, had given expression to three wishes; one for Poland, one for France, and a third evidently for a coalition which should bring Fox into office with Pitt. Fox, in reply, says: "None of your three wishes are, I fear, likely to be accomplished. It is over, as you have already heard, with poor Poland; and what has happened at Paris seems to make the chance of the poor French being settled worse than ever. It seems as if the Jacobins had determined to do something as revolting to the feelings of mankind as the Duke of Brunswick's proclamation; but, though it must be owned that they have done their utmost for this purpose, yet, with respect to mine, they have not succeeded, for the proclamation, in my judgment, still remains unrivalled. As to your third wish, I believe it is out of the question, nor do I much regret it. It would be too late to do any great and real good in regard to foreign affairs; and, for my own sake, when I consider the many disagreeable circumstances that always attend *new* connections, and, what is much worse, the possible discontent that may arise among the old, I do not know whether I am not better as I am. However, if I know myself, I never allow any considerations respecting my own comfort or disadvantage to weigh with me so as to influence my *conduct* on these occasions, however my wishes may be affected by them."†

* Vide "Correspondence," vol. ii. p. 363. † Ibid. vol. ii. p. 366.

On the 3rd of September, 1792, he writes: "There is nothing new here, and, indeed, if there were, I am not in the way of hearing it; but I believe French news is what all the world is principally interested about. I do not think near so ill of the business of the 10th of August as I did upon first hearing it. If the King and his Ministers were really determined not to act in concert with the Assembly, and still more if they secretly favoured the invasion of the barbarians, it was necessary, at any rate, to begin by getting rid of him and them. Indeed, you know that from the moment of the dismission of the Jacobin Ministry, I have thought that it was absolutely necessary either that the Assembly should come round to the Feuillans, or (which seemed most according to our Whig ideas) that the King should be forced to have Ministers of the same complexion with the Assembly. However, it is impossible not to look with disgust at the bloody means which have been taken, even supposing the end to be good, and I cannot help fearing that we are not yet near the end of these trials and executions. Many accounts give me great uneasiness for the Queen, and I am more and more sorry every day that they did not (as I think they ought to have done) either shut her up, or send her away (the last best), after the King's escape last year. The capture of Longwy, especially if it is true that the municipality forced the garrison to surrender, is a very bad beginning of the war; and, indeed, the way in which the news of it was received in the National Assembly does not appear very magnanimous. There is a want of dignity and propriety in everything they do. When the enemy is in a manner at their doors, to be amusing themselves with funerals and inscriptions, and demolitions of statues, and creations of honorary citizens, is quite intolerable; and to talk so

pompously of dying for liberty and their country, before one single gallant action has been performed by any part of their army against the enemy, is worse than ridiculous. And yet, with all their faults and all their nonsense, I do interest myself for their success to the greatest degree. It is a great crisis for the real cause of liberty, whatever we may think of the particular people who are to fight the present battle." *

Again, in September, after the massacres, he writes: "I had just made up my mind to the events of the 10th of August, when the horrid accounts of the 2nd of this month arrived, and I really consider the horrors of that day and night as the most heart-breaking event that ever happened to those who, like me, are fundamentally and unalterably attached to the true cause. There is not, in my opinion, a shadow of excuse for this horrid massacre—not even the possibility of extenuating it in the smallest degree; and if one were to consider only the people of Paris, one should almost doubt to whom one should ——" † (The rest torn.).

In a letter of the 12th October, after exulting in the defeat of the Duke of Brunswick, he says, in a subsequent passage: "You will understand that I only mean to defend the Jacobins as far as the 10th of August inclusively, for if they have had any hand in the massacre of the 2nd of September, and the killing of the prisoners at Versailles, there is no excuse, no palliation, for such cruelty and extreme baseness. There are hopes, however, that the monsters who caused these horrors will at last be punished. Till they are, I own that their impunity (notwithstanding the noble speeches of Roland, Vergniaux, &c.) throws a slur upon the present

* Vide "Correspondence," vol. ii. p. 368. † Ibid. vol. ii. p. 370.

brilliant administration of France which gives pain to all true friends of liberty. It is not enough to express horror at such execrable scenes, but no man of proper feelings could bear to be a member of a government unable to punish the actors of them. Well, enough of French politics. All friends to the good cause, whatever they think of Jacobins, &c., must rejoice at the defeat of the Germans, and there I am sure we shall agree." At the end he says: "I was glad to find that the Duke of Bedford, aristocrat as he is, wished against the invaders." *

Fox's joy at the retreat of the Duke of Brunswick was very great. In the same letter of October 12 he says, "The defeats of great armies of invaders always gave me the greatest satisfaction in reading history, from Xerxes' time downwards; and what has happened in America and in France will, I hope, make what Cicero says of *armed force* be the opinion of all mankind: '*Invidiosum, detestabile, imbecillum, caducum.*'" †

Greatly would Fox have rejoiced at the defeat of the great host which invaded Spain in 1808, and the far greater host which invaded Russia in 1812. But the period which Cicero and Fox looked for, when armed force would cease to decide the fate of empires, is, I fear, far distant still. Indeed, it may be doubted whether a state, or a party in a state, long in possession of power will ever acknowledge that the progress of opinion requires that they should quietly transfer authority to other hands. In our own days we have not seen the Southern States of America abandon slavery, or Austria renounce her rule in Italy or in Germany, without an armed struggle. Will it always be so?

* Vide "Correspondence," vol. ii. p. 374. † Ibid. vol. ii. p. 372.

In November, he writes to his nephew: "I agree with you in disliking Dumouriez's vapouring; but a Frenchman must be a Frenchman. I doubt his success in Brabant on account of the influence of the priests; but, on the other hand, I have a great idea of the power of a French army in these moments of enthusiasm and victory."*

So much better did Fox reason from general principles of human nature than the Minister did from the discord and disorganization of the French Councils and Assembly,

On the 23rd of November, he writes: "You have heard, by this time, of the complete conquest of the Netherlands by Dumouriez, so that all his vapouring promises are fulfilled. I cannot reconcile my mind (with all my partiality) to these boasting manners, but success, I suppose, will put them quite in fashion. I think the mode of the Austrian Government's leaving Brussels is the most contemptible I ever heard of. The Princess, after having grossly deceived them about the action at Jemappe, and the capture of Mons, runs away, and leaves behind her a declaration annulling her former acts, of which the Brabanters had complained, and promising them, in the Emperor's name, an acquiescence in all their wishes. What a dignified moment for concession! The French disclaim any intention of interference in Dutch affairs, but whether their disclaimer, even if sincere, is much to be relied upon, I doubt. Our Ministry are much alarmed, and have, it is said, sent Lindsay to Paris. I shall think them as mad as —— if they suffer anything to draw them into a war with France, and yet it is impossible for a nation, as it is for an individual, to say that at all events she will not fight. In this case, I think myself sure that it can be avoided with honour, and, therefore, I suppose it will be, though I

* Vide "Correspondence," vol. ii. p. 376.

do really think that Pitt, in these businesses, is a great bungler."*

Lord Holland seems to have returned to England at the end of 1792, but in 1793, after war had been declared, he was in Spain.

On the 14th of June of that year, Fox writes to him: "People here begin to be heartily tired of the war, in some degree owing to the disgust pretty generally felt at the scandalous conduct of the Empress and Prussia in respect to Poland, but chiefly to the extreme distress which is felt at home. I do not know whether there is not some comfort in seeing that, while the French are doing all in their power to make the name of liberty odious to the world, the despots are conducting themselves so as to show that tyranny is worse. I believe the love of political liberty is *not* an error, but, if it is one, I am sure I never shall be converted from it, and I hope you never will. If it be an illusion, it is one that has brought forth more of the best qualities and exertions of the human mind than all other causes put together, and it serves to give an interest in the affairs of the world, which, without it, would be insipid. But it is unnecessary to preach to you upon this subject; so now to myself. You will hear by others of what has been done, and is doing, for me. I may, perhaps, flatter myself, but I think that it is the most honourable thing that ever happened to any man. The sum which has been raised is such as will pay all my debts that are in any degree burthensome, and give me an income upon which I can live comfortably without contracting any more." †

The allusion in these last paragraphs is to a subscription raised by his friends to pay his debts, and buy him an annuity.

* Vide "Correspondence," vol. ii. p. 379. † Ibid. vol. iii. p. 39.

Both Fox and Pitt accepted this sort of pecuniary assistance. In both instances the liberality of the subscribers was prompted by the most sincere friendship, and accepted without humiliation.

Again he says, on the 1st of August, 1793: "The internal affairs of France seem more embroiled than ever, and it is an interesting object of curiosity to see whether and what effect is produced by the taking of Valenciennes. Nothing can be more according to my opinion than all you say about the Polish business. There are now hopes that the two robbers may quarrel about the spoil, as it is supposed the Poles will make an offer of their whole kingdom to the Empress, and some people think that it is such a bait that she cannot resist it. However, all this I have from mere report; but you wish me to write politics, and, not knowing anything authentic, I must write what I hear. As to what I think upon these subjects, you know all my opinions too well to make it necessary for me to repeat them, only that, whether from obstinacy or from philosophy, I know not, I grow to value political liberty more and more every day."*

On the siege of Dunkirk he says: "That the Admiralty have been to blame I can easily believe, and knowing my uncle's† great dislike to the Duke of York, I do not think it impossible that he may have been so, too; but even if Ordnance and Admiralty had done all they could, the project was fundamentally absurd, dangerous to the extreme, as has appeared in the execution, and worse than useless, I think, if attained. But to besiege it, without previously enabling themselves to invest it, was a degree of madness quite unaccountable, and this, I know, was the general opinion of all reasonable military men before the failure;

* Vide "Correspondence," vol. iii. p. 43. † The Duke of Richmond, Fox's uncle.

for opinions formed upon the event you know I do not give much credit to."*

Again, in the same letter: "The very name of liberty is scarce popular; but the failure of the war against France, and the calamities which the war must bring on here, may make it so again. The most violent Tories here, and, indeed, all the world, except the Ministry and some hot friends of mine, are for peace; but I believe, at the same time, that they are inconsistent enough to be against all means of bringing about peace. What will happen here nobody knows, but I cannot help flattering myself that the marked incapacity of our present Ministers for war will produce peace in some way or other. They appear to me to have been much more deficient in common sense than one ought reasonably to expect one's enemies to be."†

On the 7th of November: "You will, long before this, have been satisfied of the groundlessness of your notion that France was likely to be conquered. Since I wrote last, the Duke of York has gained an advantage which, *for the present*, will probably make the French retire within their own territory; and, if Flanders can be kept free from their incursions during the winter, I believe it is as much as the most sanguine expect. The King of Sardinia has been obliged again to leave Savoy at their mercy, and it is reported that they have given a considerable check to the combined armies near Strasburg. What a pity that a people capable of such incredible energy should be guilty, or, rather, be governed by those who are guilty, of such unheard-of crimes and cruelties!"‡

* Vide "Correspondence," vol. iii. p. 50. † Ibid. p. 51.
‡ Ibid. vol. iii. p. 56.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

CONDUCT OF THE WAR, 1794.

PITT's conduct of the war may be considered under the heads of foreign alliances, military expeditions, and financial measures.

Under the head of foreign alliances, Pitt's policy was founded upon a mistaken estimate of the motives and sentiments of the German Powers. For a short time Austria and Prussia were closely united by the dread of France, but the first shock of arms over, they relapsed into their habitual jealousy of each other and into apathy in regard to all measures which required joint action. The consequence of this feeling at Berlin and Vienna was that the war soon came to be considered as an English war waged for English objects. It was observed that England alone flourished, while Germany was exhausted by the efforts she had made; and the conclusion drawn from these premises was that no more vigour should be displayed than would be sufficient to extract the much desired subsidies from Great Britain. It is true there were some politicians, and some military men both in Prussia and in Austria, who wished to carry on the war in earnest, but the Ministers and military commanders contrived to impede all their exertions, to interpose delay where promptitude was re-

quired, and to introduce feebleness into the execution of projects to which nothing but the utmost boldness and energy could give a chance of success. Pitt might have done much to preserve the harmony, if not to stimulate the vigour, of the Alliance. But unfortunately his whole policy consisted in offering money in return for the muster-roll of useless armies, whose action was paralyzed by their own governments. The more the Continental States hung back, the more eager did Pitt appear to pour into their laps the treasures of England; and they thus became more and more convinced that the war was an English war, and that in supporting it they should support English objects. Hence they soon became lukewarm, and resolved to consult nothing but their own convenience. Such, and not the inadequacy of military means, or the want of valour in the field, were the causes which led to the reverses of 1794, the conquest of Belgium, the loss of Holland, and the peace of Basle.

It would be a long and tedious work to trace all the subtle contrivances by which the threads of the Alliance were separated, and the whole web broken. But there are some parts of the process which are too full of instruction to be omitted. The plan of restricting France within narrower limits, in order to improve the Austrian frontier; that plan which had excited the prophetic rage of Burke, and the patriotic indignation of Frenchmen, whether Royalists or Republicans, was much discussed by politicians of Pitt's school during the gleam of success which in 1793 shone upon the arms of the Allies.

Thus, in reference to a cherished plan of Austria, by which she would have exchanged the Netherland provinces for Bavaria, Lord Grenville says in a letter to

Lord Auckland, of April the 3rd, 1793: "Your Excellency is apprized of the decided preference with which his Majesty would see the plan of indemnification on the side of Flanders adopted by the Court of Vienna, rather than that of the exchange of Bavaria; . . .

. . . . . .

You are therefore in all your conversations to point at the great advantage of the Austrians looking to the acquisition of a new barrier in the Netherlands, rather than to the exchange of those provinces for Bavaria."* Lord Loughborough, writing on the same day, says: "It is not too sanguine a hope that Artois and the sea-coast to the Somme might again be united to the Netherlands, which would concentrate the interests of England, Holland, and Austria, and form the best security for the balance of Europe."† On the 9th of the same month, Lord Auckland, alluding to a plan of getting possession of Condé, Maubeuge, and, if possible, of Lille, writes to Lord Grenville: "I had occasion to intimate fully to those whom it most concerned the expediency of retaining those conquests, if they should be made, for the future security of the Low Countries against France."‡ On the same day the Prince of Coburg issued a new declaration, in which his former promises of keeping the towns captured as a "sacred deposit" were rescinded, and conquest was clearly pointed out as the real object of Austria.

On the 16th of April, Mr. Dundas, Secretary for War, writes to Sir James Murray: "I think I may without any reserve state to you that no operation of the combined armies on the Continent can be so essential in our eyes

* "Auckland Correspondence," vol. iii. p. 5. † Ibid. p. 7.
‡ Ibid. p. 13.

as those whose ultimate tendency is to establish the Netherlands in the possession of the House of Austria, with such *extended* and safe frontier as may secure the independence and tranquillity of Holland."* In a conversation of the same month, Colonel Mack (afterwards the unlucky General Mack) informed Captain Bentinck that Austria wished to have Maestricht, Valenciennes, Condé, and Lille as frontier towns.

In the following month of May, Lord Auckland seems to have caught a glimpse of the folly of these plans, for he writes to Lord Grenville, after alluding to the plans of Austria for acquiring Bavaria: "It is not yet certain that the French troubles will be so far appeased as to cease to be dangerous to all civil society, and to the existence of every established government. But it is very certain that in the midst of this storm the other Continental Powers are infatuated by short-sighted views of aggrandizement, and are laying the foundation of a long succession of wars."† These projects of weakening France excited very naturally the alarm and jealousy of Monsieur (afterwards Louis XVIII.) the Comte d'Artois, and the French emigrants.

Lord Auckland, however, soon forgetting his recent warning, observes very complacently: "But surely it is to be wished that the war may be so directed as to effect a great and solid dismemberment of France, or at least a permanent impression so far as the chain of fortresses is concerned."‡ In the same vein Lord Auckland writes again to Lord Grenville when the surrender of Valenciennes was expected: "So far as I can form any opinion on a military subject, I believe that many of the suggestions in the enclosed paper are

* "Auckland Correspondence," vol. iii. p. 25. † Ibid. p. 55.
‡ Ibid. p. 61.

excellent, and coincide, too, with the Austrian idea of acquiring the Somme for a new boundary. It is a question worth consideration whether, in supposing the possibility of such a conquest, we ought not to insist on holding Dunkirk (and perhaps also Calais)."* On the 31st of July, after Valenciennes and Mentz had surrendered, Lord Grenville makes the following remark upon a memoir of M. Jarry which gives in great detail the plan for taking from France, and giving to Austria, the Line of the Somme: "The memoir is certainly written with knowledge and judgment. The result of what is doing on the subject will, I trust, be satisfactory and advantageous?"† It was impossible for a man in Lord Grenville's position to speak more plainly.

We may now conclude that, at this period, the Line of the Somme was to be the "indemnity for the past and security for the future" of which Pitt so often spoke. In pursuance of this plan, upon the capture of Quesnoy, Valenciennes, and Condé, the Austrian arms were placed on the public buildings and the Austrian flag displayed from the walls. When Burke heard what the Emperor had sanctioned, he exclaimed: "*Ah! le scélérat! cela vaudra cent mille hommes aux sans-culottes!*"

In the same spirit of aggrandizement for Austria, Wurmser, the Austrian General, having obtained the assistance of the Prince of Prussia for the bombardment of Landau, thought the time was come for the recovery of Alsace, and thus addressed the inhabitants of that province: "Alsatians," he said, "cast your eyes upon the other peoples of Germany; see how they rejoice at being able

* "Auckland Correspondence," vol. iii. p. 79.

† Ibid. p. 85. Vide "Memoir," p. 86, *et seq.*

again to call you their brothers. Rejoice with them! I know there is not one of you who will be insensible to the happiness of being a German."*

The Prussians, who had seen with displeasure the arms of the Emperor placed over the gates of the captured towns, were alarmed at this new proof of Austrian ambition, and the Ministers of the King of Prussia unanimously advised him to withdraw all his troops then in the field against France, except his contingent as a Prince of the Empire.

The Duke of Brunswick, his Commander-in-Chief, thus instructed, stopped the bombardment of Landau, and retiring slowly, uncovered the flank of the Austrian army. Lucchesini, a most artful Prussian agent, was sent to Vienna to ask thirty millions of crowns as the price of Prussia's continuing to share in the war.

Soon afterwards the Prussians, during fifteen days of combat, left the whole brunt of attack to weigh upon the Austrians, remaining inactive in their position. Wurmser, thus exposed, withdrew across the Rhine. The Duke of Brunswick, however, cut to the heart by the ignominy of the part he was obliged to play, earnestly entreated the King to allow him to retire from the post he held. In a manly letter written for this purpose, he revealed the whole source of the past disasters. "The raising of the blockade of Landau," he said, "will be an era in this unhappy war; and I have the grief of knowing that I am cruelly compromised. . . . The same means which have divided the Allied Powers hitherto will divide them again; the movements of the army will be impeded as they have been impeded, and the delay in the reorganization of

* "Mémoires d'un Homme d'Etat," vol. ii. p. 334. Proclamation of 14th November, 1793.

the Prussian army—a delay, perhaps, politically necessary—will become the cause of a succession of misfortunes in the next campaign, of which the consequences are incalculable."

With equal justice the Duke pointed out the cause of the French successes: "*When a great nation, such as the French nation is, is led to great actions by the double motives of fear of punishment and enthusiasm, a single principle, a single will, ought to preside in the councils of the Allies.* But when instead of that, each army acts for itself, without a fixed plan, without unity, without principle, without method, the results are naturally such as we have seen at Dunkirk, at the raising of the blockade of Maubeuge, at the sack of Lyons, at the destruction of Toulon, at the raising of the blockade of Landau."

The brave old man then offered his resignation. He was at once taken at his word, and Marshal Mollendorff, who was quite prepared to act the mean part which his Court intended for him, was sent to command the Prussian army on the Rhine.

The Court of Vienna in its turn, pressed for subsidies by Prussia, and humbled at defeats inflicted by France, began also to think of peace. Thugut suggested the recognition of the Republic, and a truce for two years, during which time a regular government might be formed in France, and a definitive treaty of peace considered. The Committee of Public Safety saw in this proposal a snare and a danger. The leaders of the Committee must, however, have drawn from it the inference that the Emperor was not totally averse to a regicide peace.

While the Cabinet of Austria, however, were in doubt whether they should accept the bloody hand of Robespierre, or the tempting gold of England, the King of Prussia seems

to have been bent on attaining at once the objects of retiring from the Alliance, and securing the subsidies of Great Britain. He had another object still more dear to him—that of annihilating altogether the independence of Poland.

These triple ends—of treachery towards England, oppression of Poland, and reconciliation with France—were, it must be owned, difficult of attainment, and it required an unusual degree of blindness in Pitt to permit of their successful accomplishment. His ignorance of Continental affairs, his want of intercourse with foreign statesmen, his extreme eagerness to obtain a triumph where no triumph was to be had, and his sanguine temper, can alone account for the success of Prussia in her dishonest policy, and the blunders of England in her infatuated course.

Such was the conduct of the war on the Continent of Europe. Further details will develope further errors.

CHAPTER XL.

PRUSSIAN DEFECTION.—BRITISH SUBSIDIES.

THE policy of Prussia—that of so directing the great Alliance of Europe as to ensure its failure—had to encounter many difficulties; but the skill of the Prussian statesmen, and their extreme perfidy, won the day against them all.

In 1794, the Austrian Colonel Mack went to London. and there unfolded to Pitt and his colleagues a plan of campaign, by which Landrecy being invested and taken, a direct march upon Paris, founded on that base of operations, should be made with all possible speed. The plan having been approved by the Cabinets of London and Vienna, Marshal Mollendorff was asked to assist in its execution by marching upon Tréves. To this summons the Marshal coldly replied that he did not know what part his Government might have taken in adopting this plan of campaign; that it contained some good ideas, but many inconvenient arrangements; and that for his part he should not march upon Tréves, lest by so doing he should lose Mayence. Prussia likewise captiously objected to a proposal of Austria to have a levy *en masse* in the empire, in order to defend the soil of Germany. Hardenberg was detached from his post, on a mission to the Arch-Chancellor of the Empire, the Elector of Mayence; and a counter proposition was made on the part of Prussia, that

six circles of the empire should be required to furnish provisions for the Prussian army. Prussia thus succeeded in preventing any effectual preparation being made for the defence of the empire.

A more open sign of defection was now ventured. Three agents of the Committee of Public Safety, sent to Mayence nominally to regulate the exchange of prisoners, were directed by the Prussian General upon Frankfort. They went there in a coach of Louis XVI., displaying ostentatiously the tricolor flag. General Kalkreuth, with whom they were put in communication, held out, as it was supposed, hopes of a separate peace. What is certain is, that the prolonged stay of these Jacobin Commissioners at Frankfort gave rise to the most sinister rumours. The King of Prussia now openly opposed any levies *en masse*, and in the middle of March declared that he should withdraw his army to his own States, leaving for the defence of Germany only the contingent he was obliged to furnish. An order to march homewards followed immediately on this announcement.

Austria and the Empire were alarmed at this measure, and could only expect the dissolution of the Alliance. But Pitt, who had but one remedy for all emergencies, immediately offered to Prussia a treaty of subsidies, and engaged Holland to aid him in giving a sum of money to Prussia to induce her to remain faithful to a cause which she had been the first to espouse. On the 28th of April, the Treaty of Subsidy, signed on the 19th, was laid before Parliament, with a Royal Message, and on the 30th, Pitt explained the treaty, and asked the sanction of the House of Commons to its provisions. Pitt on this occasion adopted a tone almost of apology. He confessed that it would be much more satisfactory to him to state that the King of Prussia

continued to carry on the war as a principal, rather than to state that henceforth that Sovereign was content to act a subordinate part. He then explained that by the terms of the treaty, England and Holland were to furnish 400,000*l.* to the King of Prussia, by way of outfit, and afterwards 50,000*l.* a month for the maintenance of his troops. He concluded by asking for 2,500,000*l.* as a vote of credit. Fox, in a high tone, commented on the speech of Pitt, which he justly called very extraordinary.

"The right honourable gentleman had said, that if he had the honour of advising the Court of Berlin, he had no doubt which way his opinion would be given, because the existence of the nation depended on the issue of the contest, but that the Court of Berlin, from a consideration of the restricted commerce, the limited resources, and the nature and form of the constitution of Prussia (which, by the way, was no proof of its excellence), might have entertained doubts how far it was prudent to remain a principal in this contest. Yet, notwithstanding these considerations, the right honourable gentleman would have had no hesitation in advising that Court to have continued a principal in the war. The House would recollect, therefore, that it was told by the Minister of the King of England, that his ally the King of Prussia had been so ill-advised, that he had taken the timid, the weak, the mean, the wicked, the shameful and scandalous determination, by abandoning the war, of abandoning his own honour, abandoning the interest and safety of his own subjects. . . . . .

. . . . . .

"The right honourable gentleman had not, however, stopped there; he went further: he said, since this was the case, since such has been the disgraceful conduct of Prussia,

such the timid and pusillanimous results of the Councils of the Court of Berlin, that Great Britain ought to step forward and press the King of Prussia to proceed contrary to the advice of his counsellors, and engage to bear the expense. What! when Spain, Austria, and all the other Powers might come to the same resolution? Yes, though all Europe should come to that resolution; for he had said, that from the moment that resolution was taken, it became our interest and our duty to stand in the place of this monarch, and to say to him: 'Since you are so ill-advised upon this business, and are determined to withdraw yourself from the contest, let us have your troops, and you shall have our money.'"

Fox said "he wished to ask whether the whole of that argument was not applicable to Spain and to all the other combined Powers at present at war with France? This was not an idle speculation; it might soon become a reality. Did the right honourable gentleman know the resources of Austria? Had he anything to say that could give the people of this country any ground to hope that the same difficulty would not be felt by the other Powers as had been expressed by Prussia? They had the same circumstances of difficulty with regard to their wealth and commerce; and all except the Dutch, the same defect with respect to their constitution. Was there any inconvenience felt by the King of Prussia that did not belong, in a great degree, to the Emperor, to the King of Spain, and to the other combined Powers? What, then, was to be expected to be the result of all this? Why, that the whole expense would eventually fall on Great Britain. He laid the more stress upon this, because the whole force of the right honourable gentleman's argument went to this point. When this came to be coupled with the avowed object of the war, the total destruction of

the French Government, the situation of this country was dreadful. If we should be of opinion that our existence as a nation depended on that point, as the right honourable gentleman's argument maintained, and the other Powers should follow the steps of the King of Prussia, then, for the sake of our own existence, we might be brought to pay for every man and every horse in Europe employed against the French in this dreadful contest. From our own conduct in this war, it would seem as if we had been originally attacked in it, and Prussia not at all; as if France had attacked us in the East and West Indies, and that the King of Prussia was only at war with France as our ally and assistant. But we all know the fact to be otherwise—that the King of Prussia originally began it; and, for anything we could now prove to the contrary, it was that very beginning of his which brought on the aggression made by the French on Holland, and which involved us in the contest. What does the King of Prussia say to us upon this occasion? Does he say: 'Sorry I am that I have involved my friends in a disagreeable situation; that I have, without intending it, brought upon them the calamities of war; but now that I have done so, I feel myself bound by every tie of honour and of justice, to double, nay, treble, my efforts to get them out of it?' No; the language was this: 'I have got Great Britain and Holland into this contest; they are involved in it at this moment from my adventure, and my dominions are more remote, and, consequently, not so immediately affected as theirs. I will discontinue my efforts, unless they choose to bear my expenses.'"*

On the 30th of May, Fox brought forward resolutions in the House of Commons for putting an end to the war. He laboured to establish two points. The first was, that

* "Fox's Speeches," vol. v. p. 261.

although the British Government disclaimed all interference with the internal Government of France, they did in fact so interfere, and that they promised protection to the monarchical party, though they did not in reality protect them. The second point was, that although Prussia had by treaty engaged to co-operate with his Majesty, she had lately ceased to do so, and only lent her troops in consideration of a large subsidy, as if the object of the war were none of hers. That Austria, if her finances were in like manner deranged, would claim similar subsidies, and thus the whole cost, and apparently the whole maintenance of the war, would be transferred to Great Britain. Fox proved victoriously these two points. In regard to the first, he referred to the memorial presented by Lord Auckland to the States General of Holland, in January, 1793. In this memorial Lord Auckland affirmed: "It is not quite four years (1789), since certain miscreants, assuming the name of philosophers, have presumed to think themselves capable of establishing a new system of civil society; in order to realize this dream, the offspring of vanity, it became necessary for them to overturn and destroy all established notions of subordination, of morals, and of religion," &c.

It would seem, from these phrases, that the laws of 1789, and the Constitution of 1791, were incompatible with all established notions of subordination, of morals, and of religion. But on the other hand, as the 5th Resolution records, the inhabitants of Toulon did declare that it was their unanimous wish to adopt a monarchical government, such as it was originally formed by the Constituent Assembly of 1789, and Lord Hood, by his proclamation of the 28th of August, accepted of that declaration, &c. The 13th and 14th Resolutions were in the following terms:

13. "That it is the duty of his Majesty's Ministers to avail

themselves of the present circumstances of the war, and to promote a pacification by every means in their power, by proposing to France equitable and moderate conditions, and, above all things, by abstaining from any interference in the internal affairs of France.

14. "That it is the opinion of this House that in every possible case it is equally desirable that his Majesty should make an explicit declaration of his views. If it is the intention not to interfere in the internal government of France, nothing can contribute so much to advance a negotiation with those who now exercise the power of government in that country as such a declaration, solemnly and explicitly made. If, on the other hand, it is intended to interfere, it is highly essential to make the degree of interference precisely known, to induce such parts of the French nation as are dissatisfied with the present Government to unite and exert themselves with satisfaction and security."*

The answer of Pitt to these very explicit demands was more than usually evasive and ambiguous. He said "that *if* it should appear, from the report of the Secret Committee, that there existed a system in this country to introduce French principles for French purposes; that *if* the same system existed all over the Continent; that *if* the whole shall be clearly imputable to the present Government of France, and be calculated to produce the same effects which it had produced in France, *then* it must be admitted that nothing less than the subversion of that Jacobin Government can be adequate to the purposes of the war." Having thus adopted, apparently, the principle of interference, Pitt went on to vindicate the support given at Toulon to the Constitution of 1789, on the ground of protecting all the

* "Fox's Speeches," vol. v. p. 307.

people of France who shall approve of hereditary monarchy. It would appear from this vindication that Great Britain was at war in order to restore hereditary monarchy in France. But this, again, Pitt disclaimed, and went on to declare that when the present Government of France should be destroyed, "the government that shall be deemed most proper to succeed will then naturally become the object of modification to the different parties." Such was the manner in which the question was evaded. The truth seems to be that Pitt was afraid to declare openly, or, perhaps, to fix in his own mind, the object of the war. If, with Burke, he had pronounced the object of the war to be the restoration of the Bourbons, he would have run counter to his own opinions and the general sentiments of the country. If he had declared that the French might adopt any form of government they chose, provided they did not interfere with other nations, he must have alienated Burke, Windham, and a large party among his supporters in Parliament. Thus hampered, he preferred to carry on war without any definite object. In this respect, both Fox and Burke had a great advantage over him in argument. Each supported a great principle—Fox the principle of non-interference in the internal concerns of another nation; Burke the principle of social order, represented by the ancient monarchy of France.

Pitt on this, as on other occasions, defended himself by quoting the example of his father when he gave subsidies to Frederick the Great. But Lord Chatham knew the character of Frederick of Prussia. He knew that every pound advanced in subsidy would buy for England effective blows, crippling France, and weakening Austria. Pitt's subsidies, on the contrary, were paid to a worthless monarch, intent upon quitting the cause he had rashly espoused, and bent only

upon acquiring in Poland the territory to be gained by the oppression and subjugation of a brave nation. For at this time broke out that formidable insurrection in Poland which, under the guidance of Kosciusko, seemed to afford to Poland one more chance of saving its independence. Alarmed at the energy and patriotism of the Poles, the Empress of Russia neglected entirely the distant carnage of the French Revolution, and employed all her military strength and all her unscrupulous policy in subduing the resistance of Poland. The King of Prussia, on his side, declared that he would himself march to Poland. Nor did he fail in this, as he had failed in keeping faith with England. He went there in May, one month after his convention with Pitt, and fought a bloody but unsuccessful battle in the neighbourhood of Warsaw. But so intent was he upon the destruction of Polish independence, that he sent for 10,000 men of his Army of the Rhine to assist him in Poland, and scarcely gave a thought to his engagements with England and Holland. When, therefore, Lord Malmesbury and Lord Cornwallis went to urge Marshal Mollendorff to transport his army to the Low Countries, in conformity with the Convention of the 19th of April, they found the Prussian General little disposed to comply. He stated at great length the military reasons which induced him to think that the Low Countries could only be defended on the Rhine; complained that the negotiations had been concealed from him; and finally declared that he could not move without the King's orders. Lord Malmesbury, who had been the active and efficient instrument of Pitt in concluding with Prussia the Treaty of Subsidy of April, could not conceal his disgust at the bad faith with which the Cabinet of Berlin evaded the execution of the Treaty. When informed by the Duke of Portland that Pitt and he were

favourable to the continued payment of the subsidy, in spite of the Prussian evasions, he wrote to the Duke: "If we listened only to our *feelings*, it would be difficult to keep any measure with Prussia. But your opinion and that of Pitt is one of sound political wisdom, and I am well pleased it has prevailed. We must consider it as an alliance with the *Algerines, whom it is no disgrace to pay, or any impeachment of good sense to be cheated by.*"*

Thus wrote Lord Malmesbury in August. Before this period, however, he had justified himself, by anticipation, in a despatch to Lord Grenville, of the 27th of June: "I should feel myself undeserving of any indulgence," he said, "if I could impute to myself the failure of this great measure—if it is to fail; but no experience or habits of business—no prudence or care, can read so deep into the human mind as to foresee that a great Sovereign and his confidential Ministers would be so regardless of their *personal honour, and so forgetful of their public interests and glory*, as to refuse to be bound in *June* by the stipulations of a treaty ratified with their full consent and approbation, in *May*." †

Yet Burke had predicted this falling-off of the Allies as the certain consequence of the policy Pitt was pursuing; and Fox had, in this very month of June, pointed out the probability of the desertion at which Lord Malmesbury was astonished. But Burke and Fox, though they were great and consistent statesmen, were not listened to. The period arrived, however, when the refusal of Marshal Mollendorff to march his army to the relief of the Low Countries became too glaring an infraction of the treaty of April to be submitted to any longer, even by Pitt. The British Government refused the pay-

* "Diaries and Correspondence of Lord Malmesbury," vol. iii. p. 122.

† Ibid. p. 113.

ment of any further subsidies. The King of Prussia and his Ministers gladly took advantage of this refusal to declare the Treaty at an end. Twenty thousand Prussians were sent from the Rhine to the siege of Warsaw, and the British subsidy was applied, without a blush, to the final subjugation of Poland. When this conquest was effected, the separate negotiation between France and Prussia made rapid advances. The Committee of Public Safety turned a deaf ear to the appeals of the Polish patriots, and thus conciliated the Court of Berlin. At the same period, the extreme fury and cruelty of the rulers of France began to slacken. It was impossible that the daily massacre of innocent persons of all ages should continue without exciting a revulsion of feeling, and the only question among the rival factions was as to who should hit upon the right moment for proclaiming mercy and moderation.

Danton relented too soon, and was murdered by Robespierre; Robespierre relented too late, and was a victim to the guillotine by which he had so long governed.

Prussian statesmen who had been willing to negotiate with Robespierre were still more willing to negotiate with his successors. The Committee of Public Safety declared that France would not interfere with the internal government of foreign nations. M. Barthelemy, a man of sense and character, was named Plenipotentiary of France, and as he was already French Minister in Switzerland, the communications and conferences were easy and uninterrupted.

Prussia declared her readiness to yield the provinces held by her and her allies, on the left bank of the Rhine; but her wakeful jealousy was excited by the fear that they might be ceded by the French Republic to Austria. This fear having been removed by an appropriate provision, postponing the final cession to the moment of a general pacification, a

treaty of peace between France and Prussia was signed at Basle, in April, 1795.

Thus the great coalition which Pitt had crammed with English gold and gorged with English blood fell to pieces. Its failure was owing partly to the perfidy of Prussia, partly to the apathy of Austria, and above all to the blunders of England.

From the cursory review we have made, it is clear that Pitt was the chief author of the rupture of the Alliance against France, which he found in existence. He had so far gratified the ambition of Austria as to excite to the utmost the jealousy of Prussia. To Austria he gave hopes of extended empire, and a mastery over both Germany and France. Prussia could not bear to see her rising fortunes thus rudely repressed. She loved herself more than she hated France. Bribed, but not satisfied, and intent on aggrandizement in Poland, she deserted the Alliance to become the humble friend of France. Such were the first fruits of Pitt's attempts to promote a Continental coalition against the French Republic.

The doctrine which Pitt had so often enunciated, that it was impossible to make a treaty with France, and at the same time maintain social order, was falsified by the Treaty of Basle. Even the cause of Poland, which a moderate friend of liberty might have espoused, was sacrificed without a sigh by the Jacobin rulers of France. So that Pitt might well have tolerated a rule which was consistent with the arbitrary government of Prussia, and the unprincipled dismemberment of Poland.

But, in fact, the doctrine that peace with France was incompatible with social order, and would be fatal to religion and morality, was nothing more than the baseless dream of

Burke, and the rhetorical phrase of Pitt. To this dream and this phrase, however, English lives were sacrificed by thousands, and a debt wantonly incurred which still presses on the shoulders of the English people, who pay to this day more than twenty millions a year for these fatal illusions.

CHAPTER XLI.

MISSION OF LORD SPENCER AND MR. GRENVILLE TO VIENNA, 1794.

THE great mistake of Pitt and Lord Grenville in the conduct of the war upon the Continent was their false estimate of the views and dispositions of the chief Powers engaged against France. The English Ministers imagined that the Continental Courts, affrighted at the revolutionary crimes and revolutionary doctrines of France, were ready to fight to the death for the cause of social order, and for the maintenance of monarchical institutions. But this was far from being the case. The first efforts of the French to put a curb on despotism and establish representative government, the first restraints put upon the absolute will of the French Monarch, had indeed alarmed the great Powers of the Continent, and these Powers had made their feeble effort, by means of the Prussian army under the Duke of Brunswick, to crush the independence of France. But when that effort was defeated at the passes of the Argonne, the Alliance broke into fragments, and each fragment began to move in its own orbit, round its own centre of attraction. Austria now pursued a course in accordance with the views which Austrian statesmen had held from the time of the Barrier Treaty.* M. Thugut and his colleagues, like their prede-

* See Coxe's "House of Austria," *passim*.

cessors, considered that the retention of the Low Countries under the rule of Austria was a mistake. They calculated the cost of the great armies necessary for the defence of these remote provinces, and they came to the conclusion that it would be wise to abandon so distant and so discontented a dependency. As English statesmen, however, founded their support of Austria on the possession of the Low Countries by the Emperor, his Ministers advised him to make an appearance of fighting for this object, but to make no hearty struggle for success. The consequences were soon visible, and were not unwelcome to Austrian statesmen. The Committee of Public Safety, who were terribly in earnest, added regiment to regiment and army to army. The Prince of Coburg, after neglecting to succour Charleroy, and after fighting a faint-hearted battle at Fleurus, withdrew to the Rhine. The whole of Flanders and Brabant fell a second time into the hands of the French. In the following winter, during a very hard frost, General Pichegru advanced to Amsterdam, and with a few squadrons of hussars captured the fleet in the Texel. The Duke of York with his army, and the Prince of Orange with his Court, were glad to escape to England.

Pitt, who had but one resource for carrying on war, adopted it on this occasion. He had lost the nominal alliance of Prussia by refusing to continue his subsidies; he retained the nominal alliance of Austria by lavish gifts of British money. He therefore offered to Austria three millions sterling; Austria asked more, and he gave more.* For this subsidy, Austria, after abandoning Belgium and Holland to the French, gave fresh promises, to be followed by fresh defeats; new resolutions, to be again departed from;

* "Mémoires d'un Homme d'Etat." It is there said that Mr. Pitt consented to give six instead of three millions.

and, finally, some weak efforts, to be terminated by peace with France. What is mortifying in all this story, is the reflection that while Tuscany, Prussia, and Spain made peace with the Republic of France, England was still deluded by the cry that men who had put their King to death, murdered their enemies, and proclaimed wild impracticable theories of government, were incapable of carrying on the relations of peace and amity. The nations of the Continent were not deceived by this pious fraud. They knew that when the English put their King to death in 1649, Spain and France were only intent on making an advantageous peace with the usurper.* They knew that neither the horrors of the massacre of St. Bartholomew, nor the tortures and murders of the Spanish Inquisition, had provoked Elizabeth or Cromwell to make war on France or Spain. Moreover, many of the military, and many of the civil officers of the German Governments, had embraced French principles. They had no inclination, therefore, to make war to prevent the advance of such principles. Nor could they believe that England felt the horror she professed. They argued that the destruction of the French navy, and the monbpoly of trade by sea, were the real objects of Pitt; and they thought it but fair that, for objects purely English, they should not fight unless amply paid for the work.

We have related in a former chapter the defection of Prussia; we have now to calculate the value of the fidelity of Austria.

In the summer of 1794, the British Ministry, disappointed at the failure of the Imperialists, determined to send Lord Spencer and Mr. Grenville to Vienna, "to endeavour to encourage our Austrian Allies to a little more exertion and

* See "Whitelocke's Embassy to Sweden."

energy," which Lord Grenville was persuaded was "the only thing wanting to ensure success."*

Mr. Thomas Grenville was a man of a strong and clear understanding, who, in spite of excessive fears of French Jacobinism, was quite capable of penetrating the real character of affairs which were transacted before his eyes. In an able and sagacious statement of the prospects of the mission contained in a letter to the Duke of Portland from Vienna, Mr. Grenville informs his correspondent that the British Cabinet will not be able to buy, even at a dear rate, "a proportionate degree of energy and activity in the war from this Government." He goes on to say: "*There is no soul in the bodies of these men*—none, at least, which is alive to the magnitude of all the objects now at stake, or which leads them to share with you the great points of common danger and common interest; and while these mainsprings are wanting, it is in vain to look for such movements and effects as cannot be produced without them."† He expresses his wish, therefore, as well as that of Lord Spencer, to be relieved from a fruitless task. At a later time he writes, that if the whole amount of the subsidy were to be expended, "it might be more advantageously used in the purchase of Hessians, Swiss, or any other such troops absolutely at our disposal, in addition to the Austrians, than in the proposed purchase of increased vigour and activity in the Government and army of this country. *You cannot buy what they have not to sell.*"‡

In a subsequent letter, Mr. Grenville, after describing M. de Thugut as very diligent and laborious in his office, proceeds to say of him: "What *we*, however, miss in him is, either the disposition or capacity to see the present great

* "Memoirs of Courts and Cabinets," vol. ii. pp. 258, 259.

† Ibid. p. 263. ‡ Ibid. p. 281.

crisis of Europe upon the large scale on which it should be looked at by the leading Minister of this Empire; instead of which, we see in all our discussions a cold, narrow, and contracted view of this subject, infinitely too languid and little for the object, and made peculiarly unfavourable to our propositions by the disinclination which he certainly feels to concur heartily with us in the great interests attached to the Austrian possession of the Low Countries."* Yet, though "cold, narrow, and contracted," "languid and little" in his views, Thugut could see clearly enough the mote in his brother's eye. In his remarks on the King of Prussia, Thugut spoke, Mr. Grenville says, "with some truth and some humour." M. de Thugut affirmed of the King of Prussia "that all he wanted was to use the whole of his army to conquer Poland without the loss of a man; and in reward to receive from us (England) a pension of a million and a half per annum."† Lord Malmesbury, who was never wanting in clear perceptions, says at this time: "It is really deplorable that we should be the only nation in Europe who are up to the danger of the moment, and that the minds of all the other Cabinets are so tainted with false principles, or so benumbed, that it is impossible to work upon them."‡

In fact, the Continental Powers had ceased to contemplate the French Revolution with the feelings of horror and affright by which they had been affected upon the first spectacle of the meeting of the National Assembly, and the first illusions of liberty. There was some reason, perhaps, for the diminution of their fear that their subjects might be captivated by the visions which had thrown so much brightness over the dawn of liberty in France. Duessa, in the form of a

* "Courts and Cabinets," vol. ii. p. 292.

† Ibid. p. 309.

‡ Ibid. p. 310.

beautiful maiden in distress, might work on the sympathies of a generous knight; but the same Duessa, when she appeared as a loathsome, filthy hag, could excite only horror and disgust. So the youth of Europe, who had been caught by the visions of liberty and equality in 1790, might well recoil from the bloody massacres and brutal excesses of the *sans-culottes* in 1793. In this situation, Austria, to the infinite indignation of the Anti-Jacobin school, thought more of extending her frontier, and procuring an improved barrier, or, better still, of obtaining Bavaria in the place of Belgium, than of crushing the Republican Government in Paris. Monsieur, the French Pretender, protested against the appropriation of French territory by Austria. The Emigrants were everywhere naturally indignant, and Cardinal Maury, the Royalist orator of the National Assembly, spoke of joining the Jacobins. But Pitt seems to have thought of nothing so much as of inducing Austria to accept our money in return for vain promises and unsuccessful hostilities. In May, 1795, four millions six hundred thousand pounds were lent to the Emperor, and this lavish loan had the cordial approbation of Parliament.* The delusion continued some time longer. English money was given in profusion, but it did not purchase energy and vigour; for "England could not buy what Austria had not to sell." It at length became apparent to all sensible men that social order was in no danger; that the French Government was as capable as any other of maintaining relations of amity; that to fight for the restoration of the Bourbons, or to fight for a better frontier for Austria,

* "Parliamentary History." In 1825, Mr. Frederick Robinson, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, announced to the House of Commons that he had obtained from Austria one million as repayment of this loan, principal and interest; and this dividend of four shillings in the pound he designated "a godsend."—"Debates," 1825.

were alike unjustifiable and dangerous; that we exposed our friends and aggrandized our enemies by a course at once wrong and inexpedient.

Pitt was not insensible to truths now become evident.

> Sed revocare gradum, superasque evadere ad auras
> Hic labor, hoc opus est.

If he and his colleagues had gone down to Parliament, had owned themselves deceived, had pointed to Prussia and Spain, where civil order had not been disturbed by a Regicide Peace, had proposed to give no more subsidies to Continental Powers, and to make peace with France as quickly as possible, what would have become of the ministerial majority?

Unhappily, whatever were his motives, Pitt persevered in a war which he no longer approved, but from which he found it difficult to escape.

CHAPTER XLII.

BRITISH MILITARY AND NAVAL OPERATIONS, 1793–4.

I HAVE said, in a former chapter, that there were three different schemes for conducting the war, any one of which Pitt might have chosen—namely: (1) to attempt the restoration of monarchy; (2) to weaken France by depriving her of some part of French territory; or (3) to defend the King's dominions and cripple France on the sea. Pitt being doubtful which object he should pursue, tried all three methods at once.

In pursuance of the scheme for restoring the French monarchy, an expedition was sent to Toulon to support a party there who had got possession of the town and harbour, and had proclaimed Louis XVII. and the Constitution of 1791. Of the success of this plan Lord Grenville was very hopeful. On the 15th of September, 1793, at night, he wrote to the Marquis of Buckingham: "After all, a few towns more or less in Flanders are certainly not unimportant, but I am much mistaken in my speculation, if the business of Toulon is not decisive of the war. Only let your own mind follow up all the consequences of that event, and you will, I believe, agree with me that the expression I have used is not too sanguine."*

* "Courts and Cabinets," vol. ii. p. 42.

Toulon was besieged and taken by the Republican troops; the Royalists, to the number of 14,300, were killed by grape-shot, by musketry, and the guillotine; the French ships were burnt by the English, and the town by the fury of the Jacobins. Such was the end of "the business of Toulon."*

Let us now see the effect of those military operations which were among the fruits of the second plan—namely, that of weakening France on the Continent of Europe.

The first requisite in an English war upon the Continent is the choice of a general. Queen Anne had appointed Marlborough as her commander; and well did he justify her discernment. In the conduct of the Seven Years' War, Lord Chatham is said to have hesitated, and looking over the list of generals in the Army List, to have exclaimed: "I don't know what effect this list may have upon the enemy, but it makes me tremble." In naming General Wolfe, however, for his Canada expedition, he made a happy though hazardous choice. His son, with greater powers, in the midst of a more perilous war than that of 1756, selected the Duke of York, a young prince of an honourable and manly character, but without military capacity, and totally wanting in military and all other knowledge. The choice was successful at Court, but fatal in the campaign. In fact, the selection was an unwise and discreditable concession to the King's partiality to his son. Of this appointment Lieut.-General Sir Henry Bunbury says: "it certainly was gratifying to George III.; . . . But the Cabinet seems to have entertained strong misgivings of the fitness of their own appointment, for they clogged it with instructions that, on every occasion of importance, his Royal Highness should convene a council of war; . . . But, much as I loved the

* Alison, "Hist. of Europe," vol. iii.

Duke personally; much as I felt the many good and amiable qualities in his character; much as I owe to him of gratitude for long kindness to myself, I cannot but acknowledge that he was not qualified to become the ostensible head of a great army in arduous service. At home, he administered the business of our military establishments sedulously, zealously, clearly, and impartially; but he possessed none of the higher qualities which influence the fate of a campaign, or turn the fortune of a battle. He was of a cool courage; he would have stood all day to be shot at; but he had no active bravery. With a very fair understanding, he had little quickness of apprehension; still less of sagacity in penetrating designs, or forming large views: painstaking, yet devoid of resources, and easily disheartened by difficulties."* Such was the General whom Pitt and Dundas employed in this great war, upon the issue of which, according to them, the fate of social order in Europe was to depend!

After some successful but minor operations, the Duke of York, being outnumbered by the generals of the Republic, was forced to retreat, first to Breda and then to Nimeguen. At the end of the year, he left the army, and returned to England. The Stadtholder in vain endeavoured to rouse a spirit of resistance to the French invaders. The English troops in the province of Utrecht evacuated that country amid the execrations of the people. Even the wounded English soldiers were attacked and murdered by our Dutch Allies. Such was the result of the violence by which the British Government had forced the Dutch to abandon their own wise policy of neutrality, and to fight for the cause of monarchy! A severe frost coming on during this winter, Amsterdam was thrown open by its

* Sir H. Bunbury's "The Great War with France," p. 44.

sans-culotte citizens to the French invaders. Other towns of Holland followed its example, and General Pichegru made himself master without difficulty of that State from which Louis XIV. had been driven with disgrace.

While such were the dark features of the campaign which England carried on upon the Continent, she was completely successful in warfare on her own element—the sea. On the 1st of June, 1794, Lord Howe, with twenty-five sail of the line, met the French Admiral, who had twenty-six, and a greater number of guns than the British fleet. The result of a severe battle was, that seven sail of the line fell into the hands of the English, and many other French vessels were so crippled that a vigorous pursuit would probably have secured several more prizes. But Lord Howe, though brave and skilful, was somewhat too old for the work required. Such were the first exploits of the war, so far as the British army and navy were concerned; showing clearly what objects we ought to pursue, and what we ought to avoid.

But every lesson was in vain; in 1799, the Duke of York was sent to command a fresh expedition, to make fresh mistakes, and to make another inglorious retreat.

Lord Macaulay, who saw clearly enough that Pitt's conduct of the war was wrong, though he fails to prove that a war, conducted on Burke's principle, would have been successful, says:

"It was impossible that a man who so completely mistook the nature of a contest could carry on that contest successfully. Great as Pitt's abilities were, his military administration was that of a driveller."

Pitt's mistake was not that he misunderstood the nature of the contest, but that not sharing the opinions of

Burke, Lord Grenville, and Windham, he tried to conduct the war without a principle and without an object, in the vague hope that France, having no credit and only a paper currency, greatly depreciated, must soon be ruined. Vain expectation!

CHAPTER XLIII.

FINANCIAL MEASURES OF PITT.

DURING the period which elapsed from 1784 to 1792, Pitt had justly obtained the credit of having repaired the finances, which the prodigality of Lord North, during the American War, had left in a state of disorder. After having restored the balance of income and expenditure, he had reserved a million of surplus, which he vainly hoped would extinguish the National Debt, in 1808. His portrait at Windsor Castle records this title to glory, and "Redemption of the National Debt" is inscribed on a scroll which, with apparent complacency, he holds in his hand. Alas for his financial fame! No sooner was the country engaged in war than Pitt, by his faulty and unsound system of finance, increased the National Debt in a manner which, at the end of the war, left an additional burthen on posterity, four times as great as the whole National Debt at the end of the Seven Years' War! Let us see how this came to pass. In the wars of the English Revolution, against Louis XIV., considerable debts had been incurred; the victories of Blenheim, Oudenarde, Ramillies, Malplaquet, and La Hogue, had entailed heavy burthens on the nation. But Montagu and Godolphin were wise enough to borrow at 5, 6, 7, or 8 per cent., according to the market value of money; so

that Walpole and Pelham were enabled to reduce the interest of the National Debt to 5, 4, and finally to 3 per cent.; diminishing at each reduction of interest the national burthens. Archdeacon Coxe tells us that such was at one time the state of public credit that, between 1750 and 1756, no less than 112*l.* was given for 100*l.* stock, bearing 3 per cent. interest.*

Far different was the conduct of Pitt. He raised, in the first place, large sums of money by loan, and very little by taxes, so as to throw on posterity the heaviest, and on his own time the lightest, possible burthen. "That it was," said Mr. Gladstone, "that conferred upon Mr. Pitt the title of 'the Heaven-born Minister.' . . . I have understood that that name came from the city of London, and came from the city of London at the time when Pitt embarked this country in the unhappy policy of meeting the expenditure of a revolutionary war, even from the first, by loan, loan, loan. . . . Here, sir, is the War Budget of 1792. What did Mr. Pitt do with regard to the first operations of the war? Mr. Pitt proposed a plan involving an excess of charge over Ways and Means of 4,500,000*l.*—that is, taking the income of the country on one side, and taking the charge connected with the first operations of the war on the other. . . He had heard then, no doubt, all those plausibilities we hear now in great abundance—such as, 'Oh, the war is all for the benefit of posterity, and why should not posterity pay for it?' He therefore met a charge of 4,500,000*l.*, not by attempting to fill his exchequer by the proceeds of taxes, but by sending into the City, and asking for a loan of 6,000,000*l.* at 75*l.* Well, he very easily accomplished that desire. . . . Mr. Pitt thought he

* Walpole's "Life of Pelham."

should get that loan at 4 per cent., but he had to pay 4*l.* 3*s.* 4*d.* per cent. even on the 4,500,000*l.* of the first year. What was the second step? In 1794, Mr. Pitt borrowed 11,000,000*l.*, paying for it, not 4*l.* 3*s.* 4*d.*, but 4*l.* 10*s.* 9*d.* per cent. In 1795, he borrowed 18,000,000*l.*, at 4*l.* 15*s.* 8*d.* per cent. In 1796, he borrowed 25,500,000*l.*, for which he paid 4*l.* 14*s.* 9*d.* and 4*l.* 12*s.* 2*d.* per cent. In 1797, he borrowed 32,500,000*l.*, for which he paid 5*l.* 14*s.* 3*d.* and 6*l.* 6*s.* 10*d.* per cent. Surely he deserved popularity! Surely for this he was a Heaven-born Minister! Again, in 1798, Mr. Pitt borrowed 17,000,000*l.*, at 6*l.* 4*s.* 9*d.* per cent. Such were the fatal effects of the series of measures upon which he had entered, that in order to obtain those 17,000,000*l.* independently of annuities separately created, he added 34,000,000*l.* to the capital of the National Debt. In fact, the financial operations of these six years, unsuccessful and ineffective as they were, in respect to the war, gave him a sum of no more than 108,500,000*l.*, but they added nearly 200,000,000*l.* to the capital of the National Debt."*

Such is the picture of Pitt's financial policy during the first five years of the war, drawn by no unfriendly hand.

It must be remembered that, as the debt was not increased after the manner of Montagu and Godolphin, so neither could its burthen be lightened after the manner of Walpole and Pelham. For 108,500,000*l.* borrowed between 1793 and 1798, with the exception of sums paid off, we still pay 4*l.* 3*s.* 4*d.*, 4*l.* 10*s.* 9*d.*, 5*l.* 14*s.* 3*d.*, and 6*l.* 4*s.* 9*d.* per cent.

The encouragement, and, in Pitt's eyes, the justification of this wanton extravagance, was the expectation on his part that the war would not last. "I remember," said Mr. Canning, "hearing Mr. Pitt, not in his place in Parlia-

* "Parliamentary Debates," 3rd series, vol. xiii. pp. 1472–4.

ment, where it might have been his object and his duty to animate zeal and encourage hope, but in the privacy of his domestic circle, among the friends in whom he confided—I remember well hearing him say, in 1793, that he expected that war to be of very short duration. That duration ran out to a period beyond the life of him who made the prediction."*

It was in the vain and false expectation that the war would be short, and with a view to reconcile the people to burthens of which they might otherwise soon be weary, that Pitt made such inadequate provision for its expenses.

It was with this view that he charged us, his posterity, with loans at 5 and 6 per cent., which we are now paying with the 3 per cents at 88. Thus, of the different modes of carrying on war, before enumerated—viz., by alliances, by expeditions, and by pecuniary exertions—no one had been successfully pursued. Prussia, instead of cementing her alliance, had fallen off, and had made peace with the Jacobin Republic; Austria had no energy to sell, and her languid efforts always ended in defeat. The campaigns in the Low Countries, carried on by an incapable commander, had terminated by the evacuation of Holland, amid the execrations of the people whom our young Prince went to deliver from the "miscreants" of France. An enormous addition had been made to the National Debt of Great Britain, in such a manner as to entail a perpetual burthen on posterity of an amount needlessly swelled by lavish extravagance and erroneous views of finance.

It may be well to state here what was the actual increase of debt which Pitt and his successors have left to us, and our posterity, as a legacy. At the end of the American

* "Parliamentary Debates," New Series, vol. viii. pp. 1519–20.

war, the National Debt amounted, in round numbers, to 257,000,000*l.* On the 5th of January, 1817, when the French war was over, the National Debt was . . 845,000,000*l.*

257,000,000*l.*

588,000,000*l.*

Of this immense sum, a wise Minister might probably have spared 500,000,000*l.*, the interest of which we have to pay yearly, with little hope of its diminution.

CHAPTER XLIV.

FOX'S LETTERS TO HIS NEPHEW.—HIS HAPPINESS IN PRIVATE LIFE.—HIS MARRIAGE.

WHILE Fox derived happiness from the reflection that he had done all in his power to prevent the war, there would frequently come over his heart the sadness which his love of humanity could not but inspire in those calamitous times. At these moments the verses of Cowper recurred painfully to his mind:

> "Oh! for a lodge in some vast wilderness,
> Some boundless contiguity of shade,
> Where rumour of oppression and deceit,
> Of unsuccessful or successful war,
> Might never reach me more! My ear is pained,
> My soul is sick, with every day's report
> Of wrong and outrage with which earth is filled."

He alludes to these lines in a letter to his nephew, written about Christmas, 1793, in which, after mentioning a note of Lord Robert Fitzgerald, he says: "In short, there is such a barefaced contempt of principle and of justice in every step we take, that it is quite disgusting to think that it can be endured. *France is worse* is the only answer, and perhaps that is true in fact, for the horrors there grow every day worse. The transactions at Lyons seem to surpass all their former wickedness. Do you remember Cowper?

"'Oh! for a lodge,' &c.

It is a much more natural wish now than when it was uttered. If I had written yesterday, I should have said, 'Poor O'Hara;' to-day I am glad that he is a prisoner, as it has exempted him from being concerned in the evacuation of Toulon. We do not yet know to what number, but it is certain that thousands of poor wretches, who had been deluded by our promises, are now left by us to the guillotine. It must be a strong case of necessity which can justify such a proceeding, and at any rate it is fortunate for a man not to be concerned in it."*

Sometimes he wrote of the state of the Whig party. Thus, in March, 1794, he says: "The Duke of Portland, Fitzwilliam, and Grenville all came, or wrote to me some days before the meeting of Parliament, to tell me, with the strongest expressions at the same time of personal friendship and esteem, that they felt it necessary to take a more decided line than they had hitherto done, in support of the Administration; in short, to declare formally the separation, or, rather, the dissolution, of the Whig party. Many from this supposed that they meant to join the Ministry by taking offices; I did not, and I now think it is clear that I was right. However, they all voted for the address, and persuaded the Duke of Devonshire to do the same, and the Cavendishes in the House of Commons to stay away, for they could not be brought to vote with Pitt or for the war. You will easily imagine how much I felt the separation from persons with whom I had so long been in the habit of agreeing. It seemed some way as if I had the world to begin anew, and if I could have done it with honour, what I should best have liked would have been to retire from politics altogether; but this could not be done, and therefore there remains nothing but to get together the

* "Memoirs and Correspondence of Fox," vol. iii. p. 59.

remains of our party, and begin, like Sisyphus, to roll up the stone again, which, long before it reaches the summit, may probably roll down again. Even in our small party, all is not quite in harmony; but I rather think that the necessity of concert begins to be more felt, and that we may soon become something like a party. In the House of Commons we are weak in numbers, but not in argument, nor, I think, in credit, for notwithstanding Pitt's great majorities, it is evident that the House is very far from sanguine about the war, if not altogether disgusted with it. Everything we say against it is heard with great attention, and though Pitt has spoken two or three times extremely well, the House does not appear to be responsive to him."*

Giving an account of the speakers of his party, he says: "On our side, Grey, I think, is the person most improved. Sheridan has spoken admirably, but that is not new. Whitbread did very well indeed last Thursday, which was the first time he has done so since the Russian business, which raised my expectations of him so much. In the House of Lords, Lord Guildford has raised himself very high in all people's opinions, and Lord Albemarle is very promising indeed. The Duke of Bedford spoke, as I hear from everybody, excessively well; which, on every account, I am happy at. His steadiness and zeal have been of the greatest use, and I think he is a man that, having begun, is sure to go on. I look upon him to be one of the main pillars of the party. You know, I am one who think both property and rank of great importance in this country in a party view; and, in addition to these, the Duke of Bedford has a very good understanding—I wish I could add, popular manners. Lauderdale and Derby you know; in short, there is quite enough

* "Memoirs and Correspondence of Fox," vol. iii. p. 65.

in the House of Lords to make it a very troublesome place to Ministers, and to give you an opportunity of debating when you come. When will that be? I do long to see you, I own; and when you have seen Italy, I do not know what should stop you. At Naples there is a great deal to see, particularly antiquities, some of which are not so much worth seeing for themselves as for the very pretty places which you see in going to them. The temples at Pæstum are more curious than beautiful, but the road there is very well worth seeing, especially about Salerno, which seems to be the country Salvator Rosa most studied."*

Again, in the same month, he writes: "Arguments against the war and our alliances are heard favourably in the House of Commons, though they do not get us a vote; but sentiments of liberty and complaints of oppression are very little attended to, however well founded. In short, liberty is not popular, and of those who are attached to it, there are too many who have wild and impracticable schemes of government, to which the miserable state we are in, both in regard to Foreign Affairs and our Constitution, gives more plausibility and credit than they are by their own merit entitled to. The country seems divided (very unequally indeed) between the majority, who are subdued by fears or corrupted by hopes, and the minority, who are waiting sulkily for opportunities for violent remedies. The few who are neither subdued enough to be silent through fear, nor desperate enough to give up regular opposition, in expectation of more violent measures, are weak both in number and weight; but, though weak, we are right, and that must be our comfort."†

On the 25th of April, writing from St. Anne's Hill, and re-

* "Memoirs and Correspondence of Fox," vol. iii. p. 67. † Ibid. p. 70.

ferring to two letters he had written to his nephew, he says: "In the first, I gave you an account, at length, of politics, particularly as far as concerned myself. They go on, according to the Irish translation of *semper eadem*, worse and worse. I am heartily tired of them, but one must do one's duty. In the course of the debates upon the last measure of enlisting the Emigrants, it seemed to be avowed that the restitution of the old Government of France is *now* the object of the war, and that the re-instatement of the Emigrants in their possessions is to be the *sine quâ non* of peace. Surely this is madness, or I am mad. Here am I passing a most comfortable week of holidays, the weather delicious, and the place looking beautiful beyond description, and the nightingales singing, and Mrs. A. as happy as the day is long—all which circumstances enable me to bear public calamities with wonderful philosophy; but yet I cannot help thinking now and then of the dreadful state of things in Europe, and the real danger which exists, in my opinion, of the total extinction of liberty, and possibly of civilization, too, if this war is to go on upon the principles which are held out. We hear of a great struggle in Poland, but I do not like to indulge myself in hopes for the poor Poles, lest it should be all noise and end in a disappointment."*

Writing from the Manager's Box at Westminster Hall, he seems to delight in dwelling on the works of art, and especially the paintings, he saw in Italy, and refers to Raphael's pictures in the Vatican, to the San Girolamo of Dominichino, and to a picture of Christ in the garden, by Guercino, which," he says, "I think is the first of his pictures, and, perhaps, the most pleasing picture in the world." In others of his letters he also refreshes his recollections of the pictures

* "Memoirs and Correspondence of Fox," vol. iii. p. 71.

in which he delighted. He praises the Bolognese school, but seems to prefer the Venetian to any other, and the San Pietro Martire of Titian to every other picture.

Singularly happy in his nature, devoid of all envy, and knowing how little his habits were suited to official life, he bore the storm of unpopularity, libel, and calumny with unruffled ease and good humour. "It is a great comfort to me," he writes, on the 23rd of June, 1794, "to reflect how steadily I have opposed this war, for the miseries it seems likely to produce are without end. . . . However, in these bad times, here am I with Liz., enjoying the fine weather, the beauty, and, not its least beauty, the idleness of this place as much as if these horrors were not going on. When one has done all one can, as I think I have, to prevent mischief, one has a right, I think, to forget its existence if one is happily situated, so as not to be within its reach; and, indeed, I could not name any time of my life when I was happier than I am now; but I do not believe I should be so if I had acted otherwise than I have done. This is quite such weather as you would like, warm enough to sit under a tree and do nothing all day, or, as Ariosto says:

> "'All' ombra de' poggetti
> Legger d' antichi gli amorosi detti.'

I wish you were here to enjoy it with us, and, faith, that is almost the only wish I have."

He did not much like to wander back from these subjects to the passing interests of the day, and, above all, to the cruel rupture in his old party. It is interesting, however, to see in what manner he treats it, and how easily he reconciles himself to the loss of all prospect of office, which was the consequence of it. On the 18th of August, 1794, he thus writes to

Lord Holland, concluding with a reference to his own happiness, and the satisfaction he felt at the fall of Robespierre:

"St. Anne's Hill, August 18th, 1794.

"It is so long since I wrote to you last, that I think I must write now, or you will fancy (which is very far indeed from being the case) that I have forgot you. The truth is, I never had so great a dislike to writing or talking about any event that ever happened as about those which took place in the beginning of last month.* I have nothing to say for my old friends, nor, indeed, as politicians, have they any right to any tenderness from me; but I cannot forget how long I have lived in friendship with them, nor can I avoid feeling the most severe mortification, when I recollect the certainty I used to entertain that they never would disgrace themselves, as I think they have done. I cannot forget that, ever since I was a child, Fitzwilliam has been, in all situations, my warmest and most affectionate friend, and the person in the world of whom decidedly I have the best opinion; and so, in most respects, I have still, but, as a politician, I cannot reconcile his conduct with what I (who have known him for more than five-and-thirty years) have always thought to be his character. There is a sentiment in a writer from whom one would not expect much sentiment (I mean Lord Rochester) that I have always much admired, and which I feel the truth of very forcibly on this occasion. It is this: 'To be ill-used by those on whom we have bestowed favours is so much in the course of things, and ingratitude is so common, that a wise man can neither feel much surprise or pain when he experiences it; but to be ill-used by those to whom we owe obligations which we can never forget, and towards whom we must continue to feel

* The junction of the Duke of Portland, &c., with Mr. Pitt.

affection and gratitude, is indeed a most painful sensation.' I do not believe these are the words, but I know they are the sense of the passage I allude to. I think they have all behaved very ill to me, and for most of them, who certainly owe much more to me than I do to them, I feel nothing but contempt, and do not trouble myself about them; but Fitz-william is an exception indeed, and to my feelings for him everything Lord Rochester says applies very strongly indeed. But I will not say any more upon this unpleasant subject, only that I do not think we shall be much weaker as an opposition, on account of what has happened, and one would think if anything happened, as it used to do, that the events of this campaign must make us stronger. I hope you will come home soon, and if you make the figure I cannot help thinking that you will, it will make amends to me for everything, and make me feel alive again about politics; which I am now quite sick of, and attend to only because I think it a duty to do so, and feel that it would be unbecoming my character to quit them at such a moment. Here, I am perfectly happy. Idleness, fine weather, Ariosto, a little Spanish, and the constant company of a person I love, I think, more and more every day and every hour, make me as happy as I am capable of being, and much more so than I could hope to be if politics took a different turn. Though the death of Robespierre took place on the 28th of last month, we have yet no regular account of it here. I own, I think it a very good event in one view—that it will serve to destroy an opinion which was gaining ground, that extreme severity and cruelty are the means fo safety and success to those who practise them."*

Again, on the 21st, a few days later, he writes: "It is, as you say, a great comfort indeed to reflect that one is

* "Memoirs and Correspondence of Fox," vol. iii. p. 79.

wholly innocent of all the national disgrace, and more extended calamity and misery which have already arisen, and will still increase, from the rashness and violence of our Ministers. When it will end, or how it can end, is more than I can foresee. I am convinced our Government is as determined as ever to make no peace without monarchy in France, which appears to be, if possible, more out of the chances than ever. . . . Notwithstanding all they talk of idleness, I have not had time to read five pages of 'Persiles' these three days.

> "'How various his employments whom the world
> Calls idle!'

is my motto, which I have half a mind to have written on the front of the house here. I have not seen your uncle Dick* since we were at Woburn together, about a month ago. We had a very pleasant party there; but I am sorry to tell you that the Duke has overtaken me at tennis, and beat me, even. Last year I gave him near fifteen. We have a kind of annual party there, and next year, when you are there, the great pond is to be dragged, which has been kept for you. He takes much to politics, and will, I have no doubt, be steady. I believe I told you in my former letters not to omit seeing Vallombrosa and Camaldoli, with both of which I am sure you will be delighted. Pray, in the Palazzo Pitti (I think it is there), take notice of Titian's portrait of Paul III. It is by far the finest portrait in the world, to my thinking, and I have not yet heard you speak of Titian with the praise he deserves. There is a St. Mark by Fra Bartolomeo there, too, which is a wonderful fine thing, and as grand as anything by M. Angelo. Dinner is on table, and, indeed, if it were not, I have nothing more to say; so

* General Fitzpatrick.

God bless you, and write me good long letters, and come home as soon as you can."*

These are not the letters of a man soured and disappointed by his exclusion from office.

In a letter from Holkham, written in October, 1794, Fox discusses the utility of party, with some reference, also, to the condition of the Whig party at that time. Although the extract I give is somewhat long, yet the subject is one of so much importance in our constitutional system, that I do not hesitate to give it.

After discussing the merits of Correggio, and other painters, he says: "I should be much more sorry if we should have any difference of opinion about politics, nor do I think it at all likely, except, perhaps, in the degree of utility which belongs to the system of party. I do not wonder that the late events lead you to doubt the wisdom of that system. I believe they have shaken everybody; and, if instead of doubting the wisdom of the system, you had said that they showed you the imperfection of the system, I should entirely agree with you. So far I go, but no further. I remain of opinion, I hope not from mere obstinacy—that party is by far the best system, if not the only one, for supporting the cause of liberty in this country; and I fear the services it has done will appear but too plainly from the mischiefs which are likely to follow its destruction, if, indeed, it be quite destroyed. I am convinced that this system, and this alone, has prevented Great Britain from falling into what Hume calls its euthanasia of absolute monarchy; and that therefore it is my duty and that of those who think like me, to use the utmost endeavours to preserve together what little remains of this

* "Memoirs and Correspondence of Fox," vol. iii. p. 85.

system, or to revive it if it is supposed to be quite extinct. The master of this House,* the Duke of Bedford, Guildford, and Derby, and some others, with myself, make undoubtedly a small basis, but then how glorious it would be from such small beginnings to grow into a real strong party, such as we once were. The times are, in some respects, favourable to such an attempt. At the commencement of the American War, though we had a greater number of splendid names, we were not much more numerous in Parliament, and we grew to what we afterwards were by events. This war must grow to be disliked by all classes of people as much or more than the American War, and we may profit as a party by such an opinion becoming prevalent. You may say, that when we are again become strong, other men may act as the Duke of Portland, &c., have done, and again reduce us. They may. But this is an objection to all systems, for in all systems men must be the actors and the means; and men are always liable to act both corruptly and absurdly. The question upon the solution of which, in my opinion, principally depends the utility of party is, in what situations are men most or least likely to act corruptly? in a party or insulated? and of this I think there can be no doubt. There is no man so pure who is not more or less influenced, in a doubtful case, by the interests of his fortune or his ambition. If, therefore, upon every new question a man has to decide, this influence will have so many frequent opportunities of exerting itself that it will in most cases ultimately prevail; whereas, if a man has once engaged in a party, the occasions for new decisions are more rare, and consequently these corrupt influences operate less. This reasoning is much strengthened when

* Mr. Coke.

you consider that many men's minds are so framed that, in a question at all dubious, they are incapable of any decision—some from narrowness of understanding, not seeing the point of the question at all; others from refinement, seeing so much on both sides, that they do not know how to balance the account. Such persons will, in nine cases out of ten, be influenced by interest, even without their being conscious of the corruption. In short, it appears to me that a party spirit is the only substitute that has been found, or can be found, for public virtue and comprehensive understanding; neither of which can be reasonably expected to be found in a very great number of people. Over and above all this, it appears to me to be a constant incitement to everything that is right; for, if a party spirit prevails, all power—aye, and all rank too, in the liberal sense of the word—is in a great measure elective. To be at the head of a party, or even high in it, you must have the confidence of the party; and confidence is not to be procured by abilities alone. In an epitaph upon Lord Rockingham, written, I believe, by Burke, it is said, '*his virtues were his means;*'* and very truly. And so, more or less, it must be with every party man. Whatever teaches men to depend upon one another, and to feel the necessity of conciliating the good opinion of those with whom they live, is surely of the highest advantage to the morals and happiness of mankind; and what does this so much as party? Many of these which I have mentioned are only collateral advantages, as it were, belonging to this system; but the decisive argument upon this subject appears to me to be this: is there any other mode or plan in this country by which a rational man can hope to stem

* The inscription is to be seen in the Mausoleum at Wentworth Woodhouse; the exact words are: "*His virtues were his arts.*"

the power and influence of the Crown? I am sure that neither experience nor any well-reasoned theory has ever shown any other. Is there any other plan which is likely to make so great a number of persons resist the temptations of titles and emoluments? And if these things are so, ought we to abandon a system from which so much good has been derived, because some men have acted inconsistently, or because, from the circumstances of the moment, we are not likely to act with much effect? I had no idea of going on so far when I began, or I would have endeavoured to have written a little more regularly and systematically upon a subject which I have certainly thought much of, but not with a view of discussing it in a regular way; but when we meet, which I hope will now be soon, I will talk it over with you till you are tired."*

Fox renews the subject in a letter from St. Anne's Hill of the 15th of December: "I have not time to-day to write to you upon half the things I had intended, so will only say one word in answer to what you say in your last about party. You conceive the influence of the Crown, which you admit party to be good for counteracting, to be all abuse, and that it may be destroyed; and in this, in my opinion, consists your principal error. How is it possible that the Executive Government of such an empire as ours should not have a great patronage, which must always be liable to be abused for the purpose of improper influence? The defence of such extensive possessions, and the collection of so large a revenue, must always in our form of government be attended with an influence of the Crown, to counteract which, party (even according to your notions

* "Memoirs and Correspondence of Fox," vol. iii. p. 88.

of it) is necessary; and I am so far from thinking as you do that this influence may be destroyed, that I am at a loss for any plan by which it can be in any considerable degree diminished; and, perhaps, the more you think upon this subject practically and in detail, the more difficulties you will find. However, let anything be tried that affords any rational hope of success, though I may not be sanguine in it. You will perceive I am always speaking upon the supposition of the form of government remaining unaltered, but even in the case of republics, I think I could equally show the necessity of party principles and parties; but as I believe we thoroughly agree in wishing the form of government to continue, that argument would be foreign to our present purpose. However, of all these things I shall have great pleasure in conversing with you at leisure, and more, perhaps, than you like. Adieu; I must finish, though I have a thousand things to say. I have no doubt but you rejoiced as I have done upon all these acquittals, about which I was very anxious indeed. It is a good thing that the criminal justice of the country is not quite in the hands of the Crown."*

On the 6th of March, 1795, Fox writes to his nephew on some views of his, and adds some remarks on Lord Fitzwilliam's recall. It will be seen that his opinions in favour of the justice and policy of concessions to the Roman Catholics were adopted early and never varied. Here are his words: "Though I have no time to write you more than a few lines, I must not let the post of to-day go without telling you how very much delighted I am with your verses to Mrs. A., which I received together with another letter from you, dated the 24th of January, this morning.

* "Memoirs and Correspondence of Fox," vol. iii. p. 94.

I do not know that the verses, as such, are particularly good, but there is a kindness in them and something altogether that made me quite happy when I read them; and indeed you are right, for I believe if ever there was a place that might be called the seat of true happiness, St. Anne's is that place. In a postscript to the last letter I wrote you, I told you a report of the Ministry here having disavowed Fitzwilliam; I did not then believe it, but it has turned out to be true to a greater extent, even, than the report. He is to come home immediately, and states himself publicly to have been betrayed and deserted not only by Pitt, but by the Duke of Portland. The business will, I hope, be made public soon in all its parts. At present it is very unintelligible, but I feel myself quite sure that Fitzwilliam will turn out to be as much in the right in all its points as he is clearly so in my judgment with respect to the measures about which the difference between him and the Ministry is said to be the widest. I am told that they give out that the Catholic Bill is the real cause of this recall, and that the question of Beresford, Attorney-General, &c., is comparatively of no consequence. Now, as to the Catholic Bill, it is not only right in principle, but, after all that was given to the Catholics two years ago, it seems little short of madness to dispute (and at such a time as this) about the very little that remains to be given them. To suppose it possible that now that they are electors they will long submit to be ineligible to Parliament appears to me to be absurd beyond measure; but common sense seems to be totally lost out of the councils of this devoted country."*

On the 12th of April, he writes again: "Mrs. A. tells me that it is a long time since I wrote to you. I thought

* "Memoirs and Correspondence of Fox," vol. iii. p. 99.

not, but yet I recollect that when I wrote last, I was in the Ninth Book of the 'Odyssey,' which I have since finished, and read eighteen books of the 'Iliad;' so that it must be a good while since. I think the superiority of the 'Iliad' is greater than I had imagined, or than I believe is generally allowed, and more than makes up for the fable being less entertaining. To be sure, the battles are too long, and the wounds too minutely described; but there is a charm in it which makes one read on with eagerness, and a rapidity, and fire, and freedom in the manner that surpasses all other poets; and I mean this of his style in general, exclusive of the passages (of which there are so many) containing anything particularly sublime or affecting. In short, the more I read the more I admire him. There are parts of Virgil (and among those, too, imitated from Homer) which, I think, fully equal to Homer; but then he has not, in any degree approaching to his master, that freedom of manner which I prize so much; and Milton, who has some passages as sublime as possible, is, in this respect, still more deficient, or, rather, he has no degree of it whatever. Ariosto has more of it than any other poet, even so as to vie in this particular merit with Homer himself; and possibly it may be that my excessive delight in him is owing to my holding in higher estimation than others do the merit of freedom and rapidity. My mind is so full of poetry just now that I could not help giving you the *seccaggine* of this long intrusion, though I suspect you are quite out of the habit of reading poetry, as you never say a word either of Ariosto, or Dante, or Tasso, or, indeed, of any poet at all; and yet you write some, and I think your translation of Medea to Jason one of the best things you ever did in that way. You have done *Dos ubi sit quaeris*, and what follows, remarkably well, but

you have failed very much in these two beautiful lines:

"'Jussa domo cessi, natis comitata duobus,
Et qui me sequitur semper, amore tui.'" *

. . . . . Fox goes on to say: "I do not think that even peace would prevent our experiencing great difficulties—nay, perhaps it might accelerate them; but the continuation of the war, on the other hand, must make every remedy more difficult, and, consequently, the ruin more certain. I forgot whether my last letter to you was before or after Grey made his excellent speech upon the subject. He is improved to the greatest degree, and would, if the country were in a state to admit of being saved, be as likely to save it as any man I ever knew. As to myself, I grow every day to think less of public affairs; possibly your coming home and taking a part in them might make me again more alive about them; but I doubt even that. The bills of this year appear to me to be a finishing stroke to everything like a spirit of liberty; and though the country did show some spirit while they were depending, yet I fear it was only a temporary feeling which they have quite forgotten. I wish I could be persuaded that it was right to quit public business, for I should like it to a degree that I cannot express; but I cannot yet think that it is not a duty to persevere. One may be of opinion that persevering is of no use; but ought a man who has engaged himself to the public to trust so entirely to a speculation of this sort, as to go out of the common road, and to desert (for so it would be called) the public service? Would it not be said, with more colour than ever, that my object was, all along, personal power; and that, finding that unattainable, I gave up all exertion for the public? I know there is another view

* "Memoirs and Correspondence of Fox," vol. iii. p. 101.

of this question, and that it may be said, with some truth, that, by persevering, we are assisting the imposture which is putting upon the people, that the Government is still a free one. But though some would put a candid construction upon secession, yet, as I do not think the people are in a disposition to interpret favourably the conduct of public men, I fear the general opinion would be what I mentioned before, that, having lost all hope of place, we left the country to take care of itself. Homer makes Ulysses say:

"'Αλλὰ τίη μοι ταῦτα φίλος διελέξατο θυμὸς;
οἶδα γὰρ ὅττι κακοὶ μὲν ἀποίχονται πολέμοιο,"*

and I cannot help feeling something like the same sentiment. I am so sure secession is the measure a shabby fellow would take in our circumstances, that I think it can scarcely be right for us; but, as for wishes, no man ever wished anything more. I am perfectly happy in the country. I have quite resources enough to employ my mind; and, the great resource of all, literature, I am fonder of every day. And then the lady of the Hill is one continual source of happiness to me. I believe few men, indeed, ever were so happy in that respect as I. Besides, with my limited income, it would be far easier to us to keep out of debt, if I were not obliged to have a house in town. In short, every reason that relates to my own interest or happiness is on the side of giving up the thing, and perhaps this makes me suspect the argument on that side of the question. However, events and circumstances may happen which may make that right, which I am sure would be pleasant, and I think it not unlikely that they may. God bless you."†

* "Yet wherefore doubtful? Let this truth suffice:
The brave meets danger, and the coward flies."
U. XI., 407, 8.—POPE'S TRANSLATION.

† "Memoirs and Correspondence of Fox," vol. iii. p. 104.

In a letter of June the 9th, he says: "The Austrian loan has been voted by small majorities, and evidently, I think, against the grain. Indeed, it is the most impudent measure, all things considered, that ever was carried through. The Prince's business has since been the chief business, which is much too complex to explain to you, and which, perhaps, you will scarcely understand from the newspapers. To-morrow it comes on again, I hope for the last time, for I am heartily tired of it, and of the Session, too, and do very much long for St. Anne's and quiet. Mrs. A. and I had each a letter from you last week; I need not say how much pleasure your letter to her gave me. You were never more right than in what you say of my happiness derived from her. I declare, I think my affection for her increases every day. She is a comfort to me in every misfortune, and makes me enjoy doubly every pleasant circumstance of my life. There is to me a charm and a delight in her society which time does not in the least wear off; and, for real goodness of heart, if she ever had an equal, she certainly never had a superior."*

In a postscript to a letter of the 16th of the same month, he says: "I forgot to tell you that there is much talk of a triple alliance of Great Britain, Russia, and Austria, which is to bring on a war with Prussia, possibly with Sweden and Denmark, and probably with Turkey, and so involve all Europe; and this some people approve. What a truly diabolical character we are taking up! for it is certain that if we were to let them alone, all the world would be at peace; and for what a purpose are we instigating them all to war? However, I understand that in all foreign countries we are hated as much as we deserve. More cannot be." †

* "Memoirs and Correspondence of Fox," vol. iii. p. 110-11.

† Ibid. p. 114.

I have dwelt in these extracts on the passages which testify to Fox's happiness in retirement in preference to those which refer to public events, because they show more clearly the real character of the man. His entire freedom from affectation makes it certain that in these passages he speaks the genuine sentiments of his heart.

In the month of September, of the year 1795, Fox married Mrs. Armitstead, who had for many years lived with him as his mistress. His life had from his youth been one of indulged passion and loose morality. Even now he seems to have been ashamed to avow to his friends and to the world that he was able to call an affectionate and faithful woman his lawful wife. Hence Mr. Coke, his steady adherent, while he every year gladly received Fox at Holkham, refused to admit Mrs. Fox into his house.

In the parish register of the parish of Wyton, near Huntingdon, is found this entry:

"Charles J. Fox, of the parish of Chertsey, in the county of Surrey, bachelor, and Elizabeth B. Cane, of this parish, were married in this church, by license, this 28th day of September, in the year one thousand seven hundred and ninety-five, by me, J. Pery, Rector.

"This marriage was solemnized between us { C. J. Fox, / Elizabeth B. Cane.

"In the presence of { Mary Dussonville, / Jesse Bradshaw."

It was not till Fox went on the Continent after the peace of Amiens that he told his friends that Mrs. Armitstead was his wife.

Mrs. Fox was devoted to her husband, amiable and affectionate in her temper, quiet and retiring in her manner,

loving and beloved. Fond of modern literature, she constantly read with him; she was kind to his friends, cheerful in her temper, and a source of happiness which never failed him to the last hour of his existence.

CHAPTER XLV.

TRIALS FOR HIGH TREASON.—TREASON AND SEDITION BILLS.

THE abandonment of justice and moderation in domestic politics was one of the natural and necessary consequences of the war. Societies insignificant in point of numbers when compared with the great body of the people, and contemptible in point of talent when contrasted with the mighty leaders who sustained the cause of peace or of war in Parliament, sprang up from day to day, and in vapid and tawdry orations mimicked the harangues of the French Convention. But insignificant as the English and Scotch demagogues were, Pitt either felt or simulated fear, and twelve of the most active of these men, of whom Horne Tooke alone bore a name in the world, were brought to trial for their lives. On the 28th of October, 1794, Thomas Hardy, by trade a shoemaker, who had exercised the functions of Secretary of the Corresponding Society, was placed at the bar on an indictment for high treason. Sir John Scott, the Attorney General, spoke for seven hours in support of the indictment—a length of exposition which gave occasion to the remark that a case of high treason which required a speech of seven hours to explain it could not be really a case of high treason. For four days documents were read, and witnesses examined. At length, on the fifth day, Mr. Erskine rose to speak for the defence. Never were the

talents of that great orator exerted with greater effect for the benefit of his client, and the maintenance of the Constitution and laws of his country. By an admirable exposition of the Law of Treason, he showed how that severe law was intended to apply to cases of real conspiracy against the King's life and actual levying of war, and not to meetings, speeches, toasts, and rhapsodies tending, indeed, ultimately to political changes, but not immediately leading to armed resistance or organized insurrection. Then, proceeding to the documents and the evidence, he tore to pieces the case for the prosecution. Keen analysis, constitutional law, brilliant wit, moving eloquence, were all displayed in this extraordinary speech. On the 8th day, after three hours of deliberation, the jury returned a verdict of not guilty.

The only other trial of this time worth noticing is that of Horne Tooke.

Horne Tooke was a man of considerable capacity; he had wrestled, not unequally, with Junius, and his "Diversions of Purley" show research, originality, and power of analysis. On the breaking out of the war, Horne Tooke espoused warmly the cause of the French Revolution, and when the Duke of York retreated, pursued by the French army, he gave as a toast to men of congenial opinions: "The brave followers of the Duke of York!" This spirit of caustic sarcasm did not desert him when he was put on his trial for his life. Sir John Scott having burst into tears while protesting that his reputation as an honest man was the only inheritance that he expected to leave to his children, some one standing by asked Horne Tooke: "Why does he cry?" "He is crying," replied Horne Tooke, "to think how poor he will leave his children." The prisoner had no need of feeling any apprehension. Mr. Erskine carried along with

him in his flood of eloquence jurymen and public. Horne Tooke was acquitted, and none of the persons accused were convicted.

On the 29th of October, 1795, George III. opened Parliament in person. In going to the House of Lords, the King was assailed with hisses and hootings, and when he reached the part of the road in St. James's Park opposite the Ordnance Office, a small pebble or bullet, fired, it was supposed, from an air-gun, perforated one of the windows of the carriage. The King behaved with the utmost calmness, and when he entered the House of Lords, said quietly to the Lord Chancellor: "My Lord, I have been fired at." He then proceeded to read the speech in his ordinary manner. On his way back, he was again hooted, and on returning from St. James's Palace to Buckingham House, in his private carriage, without guards, he was in some danger of falling into the hands of the mob, but was rescued happily by some of his dismissed escort, who happened to be passing. The King attended the theatre in state the next evening, and was received with raptures of loyalty. In these circumstances the King showed a courage becoming his station and worthy of his illustrious lineage. In the royal speech it was stated that the prospect of affairs had materially improved. It was declared that should the destruction and anarchy in France, "which had produced the present crisis, terminate in any order of things compatible with the tranquillity of other countries, and affording a reasonable expectation of security and permanence, the appearance of a disposition to negotiate for a general peace on just and equitable terms would be met on the part of the King with an earnest desire to give it full and speedy effect." Considering that in the April preceding Prussia had made peace, and that Spain had followed her

example without any interruption of their internal tranquillity, these terms seemed scarcely befitting the occasion.

Fox accordingly declared that after going to war for miserable speculations, after incurring one hundred millions of debt, and burthening the country with five millions of permanent taxes, Ministers had insulted the country when they put into their Sovereign's mouth the impudent falsehood that the condition of the country had materially improved. Fox treated as vague and unsatisfactory the assertion respecting a disposition to treat for peace, and declared that there was no moment since the commencement of the war when better terms could not have been obtained than at the time at which he was speaking.

The attack on the King's person was fruitful in measures of coercion. The Treason and Sedition Bills of Pitt form an epoch in our constitutional history. If they mark the character of the Ministry, and their desire to curb the freedom of discussion, so, on the other hand, the theme was one to rouse all the energy of Fox. The former of these bills extended the Treason Laws of Edward III., and the second placed under strict regulations public meetings of every kind. Fox, in speaking against these bills, evidently contemplated them as the prelude to the final extinction of our free form of government. With wonderful ability and fervid eloquence, he warned the House of Commons against giving their sanction to these measures. "If," he said, "Ministers are determined, by means of the corrupt influence they possess in the two Houses of Parliament, to pass these bills in violent opposition to the declared sense of a great majority of the nation, and if they should be put in force with all their rigorous provisions, then, if his opinion were asked by the people as to their obedience, he should tell them that it

was no longer a question of moral obligation and duty, but of prudence." These words caused a burst of indignation on the Ministerial side of the house. Pitt immediately took advantage of this feeling to pervert and misrepresent the import of Fox's expressions. He said that "Mr. Fox had openly advised an appeal to the sword; advice which might be followed by the penalties of the law, or involve the country in anarchy and bloodshed." On a subsequent day, Mr. Abbott, repeating Fox's words, and misrepresenting them in the same way as Pitt had done, asked Fox to declare plainly and distinctly "whether now, if these laws should be passed, *he will again repeat his signal to the people of England, and bid them unfurl the standard of rebellion?*" In answer to this question, Fox made a full, explicit, and powerful reply. He stated that if a bill were to pass the Houses of Parliament which went to destroy the very vitals of the Constitution, which reduced a people, hitherto free, to slavery, obedience to such a law would be a question not of duty, but of prudence. "But," he went on to say, "the hon. gentleman makes me decide not only the question of duty, but that of prudence also. Upon that question he had left the people entirely free to determine for themselves. He could not recommend resistance, for prudence, in his opinion, dictated quietness to mankind under many severe oppressions. The more he thought the more he was convinced of the philosophy of the maxim of a celebrated character of antiquity—'*Iniquissimam pacem justissimo bello antefero.*'* That appeared to him to be one of the wisest sayings of that wise man, and it expressed his opinion upon the point of prudence in these cases." Such being the deliberate opinion of Fox, an opinion which he consistently held and constantly

* This is a sentiment of Cicero.

expressed, it must be admitted that while he had a right to resent the misrepresentations of his adversaries, the country had some reason to complain that in his original speech he had proclaimed an extreme opinion without the qualifications which he subsequently added. He had stated, and he now repeated, that neither Lords, nor Commons, nor King, nor the whole Legislature together, were to be considered as possessing the right to enslave the people of this country. They might, he thought, separately or unitedly do such acts as might justify the resistance of the people; but, far from adding that in the present case he would advise resistance, he intimated a contrary opinion. There can be no doubt that Fox looked upon the bills proposed as equivalent to the change which the Roman Republic underwent in the time of Augustus. He referred more than once to the despotism of that able usurper: "What fine panegyrics were then pronounced on the prosperity of the empire! '*Tum tutus bos prata perambulabat.*' This was flattery to Augustus—to that great destroyer of the liberties of mankind—as much an enemy to freedom as any of the detestable tyrants who succeeded him. So with us: we are to be flattered with an account of the form of our Government by King, Lords, and Commons. *Eadem magistratuum vocabula.*"

Was this comparison a dream or a prophecy? Did the dreaded change from liberty to despotism take place? Every one knows that it did not. Indeed, upon examining the laws passed in 1795, we cannot fail to see that, however hostile to the safeguards of freedom, they were not destructive of its spirit. The alteration of the Law of Treason was not in itself unsuitable to the change of society which had taken place between the days of Edward III. and those of George III. The law on public meetings could not really stifle opinions

earnestly and sincerely entertained; the restrictions enacted were rather vexatious than oppressive. Still, it must be remembered that the French, like the American War, was a contest on the part of the British Crown in favour of authority and against liberty. Nor can it well be denied that in the zeal for authority, and in the attempt to check the expression of public opinion in England, there was a danger that liberty would lose her strongest barriers, and fresh incursions of power might succeed. The exclamation of Lord Chatham—"I rejoice that America has resisted;" the eloquent speeches of Burke in favour of America; the wonderful forensic efforts of Erskine in behalf of Hardy and Tooke; the impassioned argument and burning denunciations of Fox during the French War, kept alive the spirit of the nation, and helped to preserve those holy temples of liberty which our ancestors had erected.

The acts of Pitt and his successors have, it is true, passed away; the free institutions of England have survived. But what would have been the case had no Erskine spoken to a jury—had no Fox denounced tyranny in Parliament? While we are in the full enjoyment of liberty, we must not be wanting in gratitude to those who, fallen on evil days and evil tongues, trimmed the sacred lamp of freedom, which its careless guardians might have allowed to sink and expire.

It may be worth remark that the correspondence of Cicero and his friends, in the last days of the Republic, shows great confidence in the perpetuity of the freedom of Rome; while Fox, in his letters, almost despairs of the liberties of England.

CHAPTER XLVI.

NEGOTIATIONS, 1795–6.

PITT had so evidently failed in his war measures, that in 1796 he was induced to attempt to obtain peace. But his failure in negotiation was, if possible, still more conspicuous than his defeat in war.

The first symptom of this desire was a letter written by Mr. Wickham in April, 1795, at Basle; but it led to no result. Later in the year, Lord Auckland, after communicating with Pitt, published a pamphlet called "Remarks on the Apparent Circumstances of the War in the Fourth Week of October, 1795." The editor of "Lord Auckland's Correspondence" expressly says: "The thoughts of Mr. Pitt naturally turned towards peace, and it was with his sanction Lord Auckland published his celebrated pamphlet."*

Burke was exceedingly angry at the appearance of this pamphlet. In answer to a private letter from Lord Auckland, sending him the work, he expressed his opinion that "the plan of politics there recommended can have no other consequence but utter and irretrievable ruin to the Ministry, to the Crown, to the succession, to the importance, to the independence, to the very existence of this country." He goes on to say: "Perhaps you may think that my ani-

* "Journal and Correspondence," vol. iii. p. 316.

mosity to opposition is the cause of my dissent, on seeing the politics of Mr. Fox (which, while I was in the world, I combatted by every instrument which God had put into my hands, and in every situation in which I had taken part) so completely, if I at all understand you, adopted in your lordship's book; but it was with pain I broke with that great man for ever in that cause," &c.

In his public letter (the fourth on a Regicide Peace) he attacked Lord Auckland with those weapons of sarcasm, scorn, ridicule, and invective which no one knew so well how to wield.

Thus he says: "Finding *the last week* in October so particularly referred to, and not perceiving any particular event relative to the war which happened on any of the days in that week, I thought it possible that they were marked by some astrological superstition to which the greatest politicians have been subject. I therefore had recourse to my 'Rider's Almanack.' There I found, indeed, something that characterized the work, and that gave directions concerning the sudden political and natural variations, and for eschewing the maladies that are most prevalent in that aguish intermittent season, 'the last week of October.' On that week, the sagacious astrologer, Rider, in his note on the third column of the calendar side, teaches us to expect '*variable and cold weather;*' but instead of encouraging us to trust ourselves to the haze, and mist, and doubtful lights of that changeable week, on the answerable part of the opposite page he gives us a salutary caution (indeed, it is very nearly in the words of the author's motto). '*Avoid,*' says he, '*being out late at night and in foggy weather, for a cold now caught may last the whole winter.*' This ingenious author, who disdained the prudence of the almanack, walked out in the very fog he

complains of, and has led us to a very unseasonable airing at that time."*

Pitt, however, was not turned from his course by this high authority. In returning Burke's letter to Lord Auckland, he says: "I return Burke's letter, which is like other rhapsodies from the same pen, in which there is much to admire *and nothing to agree with.*"†

Pitt having prepared public opinion in favour of peace by means of Lord Auckland's pamphlet, determined to negotiate at Paris. The Directory, who had rudely and peremptorily rejected an indirect overture made just before, gave an intimation that passports would be sent to a negotiator officially appointed. Lord Malmesbury was accordingly named, and, in October, 1796, set out on his mission. Some one observing to Burke that, as the weather was bad and the roads broken up, Lord Malmesbury's journey must be slow, Burke rejoined: "It must indeed be slow, as he must go the whole way on his hands and knees!" But although Pitt was thus far indulged in his wish to make peace, his colleague, Lord Grenville, held a card in his hand by which the game of negotiation might at any time be spoilt. When Lord Malmesbury had already set out for Dover, Lord Grenville wrote to him these words: "It is, perhaps, unnecessary for me to recall to your recollection that, by the convention signed with the Court of Vienna in the beginning of the war, the King is bound not to make peace without the *consent* of Austria, except on the terms of procuring for that Power the restitution of *all* it may have *lost* in the war." Now, as it was certain that France would insist on retaining Belgium, which she had twice conquered, and had annexed by law to her territory, it was clear that

* "Burke's Works," vol. ix. p. 4. † Stanhope's "Life of Pitt," vol. iv.

either Austria must be induced to waive the performance of the promise thus foolishly made, or the negotiation must fail. There were, however, two ways in which Austria might have been prevailed upon to give up Belgium. The one was to tell her roundly that, unless she did so, English subsidies would be withheld. The other was to treat her with great consideration, to depreciate the value of Belgium, and to negotiate only in concert with an Austrian plenipotentiary. Neither method was tried. After a very trifling and ineffectual effort, through Mr. Jackson, to obtain the renunciation of the Low Countries from the Court of Vienna, the British Government commenced Lord Malmesbury's negotiation without any understanding or agreement with Austria. Thugut, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, was deeply hurt by this neglect. "He dwelt long," says our Envoy at Vienna, "on the Emperor's great efforts, consistency, and firmness, when the enemy was on the frontiers of this country; on the slight shown him by the adoption and carrying into execution a measure of such a great and common interest without a previous consent being even proposed to him; stated his full conviction that it would not be productive of peace."*

In this conviction M. Thugut proved to be quite right. The British Government showed themselves as much wanting in wisdom at Paris as they were wanting in courtesy at Vienna. When Lord Malmesbury, much to his own disgust, had, in pursuance of his instructions, exhausted every kind of cavil about the basis of negotiation, he was summoned by the Directory to state exactly what compensations the English Government would give, and what concessions they would require. Thus pressed, Lord Grenville specified the restoration of the whole of the possessions of

* "Auckland Correspondence," vol. iii.

the House of Austria by France, the evacuation of Italy, and a promise on the part of France not to interfere any further in that country. On these conditions, the maritime conquests of Great Britain were to be restored to France and to her allies, Spain and Holland. To these terms the Directory quickly replied: "The Executive Government could not listen to any proposition contrary to the constitution, the laws, and the treaties which bound the Republic." Further than this, as Lord Malmesbury seemed to have no power to negotiate, he was required to leave Paris in forty-eight hours. Such was the end of this absurd and ridiculous attempt. It is obvious that if Great Britain was not prepared to assent to the annexation of Belgium to France, she should not have begun the negotiation. If, on the other hand, she was ready to concede on the question of Belgium, she ought to have obtained the assent of Austria to that cession before entering upon a correspondence with France. Had she done so, she might have preserved to Austria the possession of Lombardy. Indeed, at this very time, the Directory determined to propose to Austria the following terms of peace: Belgium and Luxemburg to remain to France; Lombardy to be restored to Austria, and the Palatinate to Germany; the Stadtholder to receive compensation for his losses in Germany.* These terms were by no means extravagant, and had they been agreed to by England, in concert with Austria, peace might probably have been made.

The fault of this negotiation, and at the same time the cause of its failure, was the same which caused the failure of the war, that it was conducted without any definite object. When M. Delacroix asked Lord Malmesbury at the outset the very simple question, whether the British Govern-

* Thiers.

ment proposed the *status quo ante bellum* or the *uti possidetis* as the basis of negotiation, Lord Malmesbury said it was too soon to ask that question. Yet on the answer to this question depended the best chance of success in the negotiation. It is also clear that the English Cabinet ought to have made up their minds on this question before Lord Malmesbury left London. When two Powers, at war with each other, have made few conquests or conquests equivalent in value, they naturally resort to the *status quo ante bellum;* when one of the two has made important conquests, of which there is no prospect on the other side of depriving her, the *uti possidetis* is the principle usually adopted. The *uti possidetis*, in this instance, would have given the best chance of peace. With regard to the negotiations at Vienna, Lord Malmesbury himself judged them truly when he said: "Pray take care that the puzzle and embarrassments which I foresee with too much certainty must arise from the manner in which we have conducted this business at Vienna be not made over to me in its puzzled and twisted state to unravel."*

Thus it was that while we were uncourteous and almost faithless at Vienna, we raised up at Paris, apparently for the sake of Austrian interests, an obstacle which was sure to prove fatal to the whole negotiation. Fox, naturally enough, could not believe that so many mistakes could have been made without design. It was therefore in a spirit of scepticism that when Pitt, in a speech of three hours of elaborate apology, explained the failure, Fox pointed out the many occasions on which peace might have been made. He said: "The right honourable gentleman, whatever may have been his sincerity in the transaction, is no

* "Malmesbury Correspondence," vol. iii. p. 282.

stranger to the advantages that may be derived from the idea of a pending negotiation. . . . It seems doubtful, indeed, from the inspection of the papers on the table, whether Lord Malmesbury was not sent over merely to show his diplomatic dexterity; to fence and parry with M. Delacroix, in order to evince his superior skill and adroitness in the management of argument and the arts of *finesse;* to confound the shallow capacity and artificial reasoning of the French Minister, and to make the cause of this country appear the better cause."*

Such suspicions were at the time perfectly justifiable. Indeed, it is evident that if, instead of employing Lord Malmesbury at Paris, that able diplomatist had been sent first to Vienna, he might easily have obtained the cession of Belgium from Austria, and then, no doubt, without haggling or quibbling, peace might have been made in a fortnight. No wonder that the sincerity of Pitt was doubted when he chose the path of ingenious refinement instead of computing the advantages and losses of the belligerent Powers, and making a fair offer of terms founded upon that computation.

In reviewing this negotiation, it is, indeed, quite clear that Pitt and Lord Grenville never provided themselves with the means of success. An honest and frank declaration to Austria that Belgium could not be defended, and an explanation equally honest and frank to France of the terms upon which Great Britain and Austria were ready to treat, would have opened the only road by which peace could have been reached. On the other hand, the conduct of the French Government in dismissing Lord Malmesbury was needlessly offensive. By this behaviour, they excited resentment in

* "Fox's Speeches," December 30, 1796.

England, and indisposed the British people to peace. They thus strengthened the British Ministry, and prolonged the war. But for this effect they were probably prepared.

Pitt must have been by this time convinced that although it was easy to commit the nation to war, it was not equally in his power to make peace when he wished it.

CHAPTER XLVII.

SESSION OF PARLIAMENT, 1796.

On the 10th of May, 1796, Fox moved an address to the Crown on the conduct of the war. In a speech of little less than four hours, he went over all the causes of the war, and pointed out the mistakes which had been made since its commencement. On the former topic he said: "I think there was a time before the war broke out between France and Austria which presented an opportunity for this country to exercise the great and dignified office of mediator, which would not only have been highly honourable to herself and beneficial to Europe, but an office which she was in some measure called upon to undertake by the events of the preceding year. The event to which I particularly refer was the Treaty of Pilnitz, by which Austria and Prussia avowed their intention of interfering in the internal affairs of France, if they should be supported by the other Powers of Europe. . . . The Emperor, at that time, was importuned by the emigrant nobility and clergy to interfere in the domestic affairs of France. Austria did not dare to interfere without Prussia, and Prussia did not wish to hazard the fate of such an enterprise. When these Powers were in such a state of uncertainty, that was the very moment for England to become a

mediator, and if this country had at that time proposed fair terms of accommodation to the parties, the matter might have been compromised, and the peace of Europe preserved, at least, for some time, for God knows, the duration of peace is at all times uncertain! If England had then stepped forward as a mediator, the questions to be agitated would have related solely to Lorraine and Alsace. And is there any man who believes, *putting out of the question the internal affairs of France altogether*, that, under the impartial mediation of this country, all the difficulties respecting the tenures of the nobility and the rights of the chapters in those two provinces might not have been settled to the satisfaction of the disputants?"

Fox, in this passage, shows how well he understood that the maintenance of peace by this country depends not upon abstinence from all interference in the quarrels of other countries, but upon a judicious use of the power of advising, and, if need be, of interposing, in the disputes of other countries.

Fox goes on to say: "Neutrality I admit to have been preferable to an active share in the contest; but to a nation like Great Britain, whose prosperity depends upon her commerce, the general tranquillity of Europe is a far greater blessing (laying the general interest of mankind out of the question) than any partial neutrality which she could preserve."*

Fox did not say, but it is an obvious inference from his words, that the mediation he suggested must have been an armed mediation. Had Pitt, in 1792, instead of predicting fifteen years of peace from a partial neutrality, declared boldly, in pursuance of her mediation, that if the

* "Fox's Speeches," May 10th, 1796.

Allies invaded France in order to dictate to her a form of internal government, they would find England their enemy, and had at the same time declared to France that she must not become aggressive nor extend her actual frontiers, under pain of English hostility, it is probable that peace might have been preserved. If, however, France had then, without cause, made a war of ambition, and had the Allies disclaimed any intention to deprive France of her old frontier, or to interfere in her internal affairs, the objects attained in 1814 might have been accomplished in 1794, without the waste of blood and treasure of which that long war was the cause. Fox, in the speech we are reviewing, after discussing again the alleged reasons for hostilities on the part of England, pointed out the writings and speeches of Burke as one of the main causes of the war. "In a masterly performance," said Fox, "he charmed all the world with the brilliancy of his genius, fascinated the country with the powers of his eloquence, and, in as far as that cause tended to produce the effect, plunged the country into all the calamities of war. . . . Never, certainly, was there a nation more dazzled than the people of this country were by the brilliancy of this performance! Much of the lustre of his opponents, as well as of his friends, was drawn from the influence of this dazzling orb; but it was the brilliancy of a fatal comet, which bore terror and desolation in its train; and we are, to this day, suffering from its baneful effects." Speaking then of the conduct of the war as distinguished from its causes, Fox said: "The great defect in the management of the war has, in my opinion been the want of a determinate object for which you were contending. You have neither carried on war for the purpose of restoring monarchy in France, nor with a view to

your own advantage. While the Emperor in Alsace was taking towns in the name of the King of Hungary, and you were taking Valenciennes for the Emperor, you were proclaiming the Constitution of 1791 at Toulon, and taking possession of Martinique for the King of Great Britain. What has been the consequence of this want of object? You have converted France into an armed nation; you have given to her rulers the means of marshalling all the strength of the kingdom against you. The Royalists in France did not join you; they did not know whether you were at war for the purpose of re-establishing the ancient monarchy of France, or for the purpose of aggrandizing yourselves by robbing France of her territories." Nothing could be more true than this reproach. Fox, adverting to the supposed project of indemnifying ourselves at the peace by annexing to Great Britain the Dutch Colonies, observed that he would say little as to the fairness of taking those possessions from a nation to preserve whose territory we professedly went to war. He added: "I will only remark that our extensive colonies in different quarters of the globe are already a great incumbrance to us in time of war; they exhaust our strength, and if our maritime force shall ever be equally opposed by a hostile Power, their possession will be very precarious."

Adverting, at the end of his speech, to the partition of Poland, he exclaimed: "And will any man contend that England and France united might not have prevented that transaction, and by that means have preserved the balance of power in Europe? But Poland was abandoned to its fate, suffered to be sacrificed, annihilated, destroyed, for the sake of those absurd and vicious principles which govern the policy of Ministers, and which have involved us in the present war."

After a long and able answer from Pitt, and some futher debate, there appeared on a division—

Against the proposed address .	206
For	42
Majority against	164

CHAPTER XLVIII.

EXPEDITION OF NAPOLEON BONAPARTE INTO ITALY.—HIS VICTORIES.—TREATY OF LEOBEN.—PEACE OF CAMPO FORMIO, 1796-97.

WHILE Lord Malmesbury was contending at Paris for the retention of the Low Countries by Austria, the sword of a mighty warrior cut the knot which the English Minister had endeavoured so ineffectually to untie. In March, 1796, Napoleon Bonaparte assumed the command of the Army of the Alps. He at once addressed his troops in the language of confidence and of victory: "The patience and courage you have displayed amongst these mountains is admirable; but they bring you no glory, reflect on you no splendour. I will lead you into the most fertile plains in the world; rich provinces and great cities shall be in your power; there you will find honour, fame, and wealth. Soldiers of Italy, will you be deficient in courage and constancy?"*

This language was no idle boast; promise was instantly followed by performance. On the 4th and 11th of April, Napoleon defeated the Austrians at Montenotte, and gained the key of the Austrian position. On the 14th, he fought a great battle at Millesimo; divided the armies of Austria and Piedmont, and took forty pieces of cannon.

Speaking of a great commander who had invaded Italy some centuries earlier, Livy says:

* "Adolphus," vol. vi. p. 443.

"Plurimum audaciæ ad pericula capessenda, plurimum consilii inter ipsa pericula erat: nullo labore aut corpus fatigari, aut animus vinci poterat. Caloris ac frigoris patientia par; cibi potionisque desiderio naturali, non voluptate, modus finitus; vigiliarum somnique nec die, nec nocte discriminata tempora; id quod gerendis rebus superesset, quieti datum: ea neque molli strato, neque silentio arcessita: multi sæpe militari sagulo opertum, humi jacentem inter custodias stationesque militum, conspexerunt. Vestitus nihil inter æquales excellens: arma atque equi conspiciebantur. Equitum peditumque idem longe primus erat; princeps in prœlium ibat; ultimus conserto prœlio excedebat. Has tantas viri virtutes ingentia vitia æquabant; inhumana crudelitas, perfidia plus quam Punica, nihil veri, nihil sancti, nullus deûm metus, nullum jusjurandum, nulla religio."*

Considering the difference of the times, of the character of Carthaginians and Frenchmen, and of the nature of the weapons employed in war, there is a strong resemblance between this character of Hannibal, then in the twentieth year of his age, and the character of Napoleon, at twenty-six. There was the same vigilance, the same indifference to the indulgence of appetite, the same hardihood of courage, the same contempt of the ornaments of dress, the same want of good faith in treating with those he encountered. Cruelty in the character of Napoleon there was not; but indifference to life there certainly was. "Il traversait," said Madame de Staël—"il traversait les vertus et les vices comme il traversait les montagnes et les fleuves, parceque c'était son chemin."

It does not belong to my subject to describe the series of victories by which Napoleon signalized his memorable campaigns in Italy, or to relate at length how, after vanquishing

* Livy, lib. 21, cap. iv.

25431

his enemy at Lodi, Arcole, Castiglione, and after receiving the surrender of Mantua, he found himself within a few marches of Vienna. As, however, the character of this extraordinary man affected the course of events for twenty years, and, indeed, still influences the politics of Europe, it is of importance to remember that his activity, his genius, his ambition, and his want of good faith, made him dreaded as an enemy and suspected as a friend. No sooner had he obtained by an armistice possession of Coni and Alessandria, than he suggested to the Directory that, if it so pleased them, they might keep the fortresses, pursue the war, and undermine by intrigue the throne of the King of Sardinia, which they professed to respect. In the same spirit he seized pretexts for driving out the Grand Duke of Tuscany, for making war on the Pope, and overturning the Republic of Venice. In all his proceedings his genius for war was accompanied by an unscrupulous use of assurances without sincerity, and engagements destitute of good faith.

On the 18th of April, one year after the battle of Montênotte, the preliminaries of peace between Austria and France were signed at Leoben. By this treaty, confirmed by the subsequent Treaty of Campo Formio, Austria consented to give up the Low Countries to France, and to yield Lombardy. This rich province was to form a new State, to be called the Cis-Alpine, a satellite of the Great Republic; Savoy was to be annexed to France; Austria was to have her compensation for the loss of Belgium out of the territories of the Republic of Venice. This neutral State having given no just cause of war either to France or Austria, was deemed by both Powers a fit subject for spoliation.

By the definitive Treaty of Campo Formio, this ancient and glorious Commonwealth was totally extinguished.

There was some consistency, if there was no justice, in the perpetration of this great wrong on the part of the French Republic—a government which had been from its commencement violent and revolutionary; but on the part of Austria, a great conservative Power, fighting for law and order, professing a regard for treaties, bound to the Venetian Republic by solemn engagements, and having no pretext for hostility, the crime had no palliation, and remains a blot on her history, second only to the partition of Poland.

In speaking of this transaction in February, 1800, Fox, alluding to the defence set up for Austria, said: "'The Emperor took it as a compensation; it was his by barter; he was not answerable for the guilt by which it was obtained.' What is this, sir, but the false and abominable reasoning with which we have been so often disgusted on the subject of the slave trade? Just in this manner have I heard a notorious wholesale dealer in this inhuman traffic justify his abominable trade. Under such detestable sophistry as this, is the infernal traffic in human flesh, whether white or black, to be continued, or even justified?" *

* "Fox's Speeches," vol. vi., p. 399.

CHAPTER XLIX.

NEGOTIATION AT LILLE, 1797.

In June, 1797, the attempt to negotiate a peace with France was renewed by the English Cabinet at Lille, but with the same infelicity as before. Yet Austria had now signed preliminaries of peace, and had herself surrendered Belgium and Lombardy, thus relieving the British Government from all their pledges on that score. Prussia, Spain, Sardinia, had disappeared from the Grand Alliance.

M. de Talleyrand, a prelate of the old Court, and free from the regicide stain, was now Minister for Foreign Affairs. The British Cabinet, on their side, were ready to yield to the insolent and groundless pretension of the French Directory that they could not give up territory annexed by the law and constitution to the Republic. But if the British Government were ready to concede to their great enemy, they were stiff and unbending to the weaker States who had fallen under that enemy's influence. They asked that Spain and Holland should sacrifice a part at least of the colonies conquered by England. But this demand, at once servile and ungenerous, was set aside by the Directory, who declared haughtily that they had secret treaties with Spain and Holland guaranteeing to them the restoration of their lost possessions.

Pitt was suspected, while this negotiation was going on, of not being sincere in his expressed wishes for peace. This charge, however, was quite unfounded. He was quite sincere in wishing to make peace. His conduct, indeed, is open to blame, but on very different—indeed, entirely opposite grounds. We have seen that in 1795 he prompted Lord Auckland to write a pamphlet in favour of a "Regicide Peace." In 1797, he established private relations with Mr. Canning, the Foreign Under-Secretary of State, and through him, with Lord Malmesbury, whose ostensible instructions were from Lord Grenville. Lord Malmesbury, in one of his letters, says: "You must have perceived that the instructions I get from the Minister *under whose orders I am bound to act* accord so little with the sentiments and intentions I heard expressed by the Minister *with whom I wish to act*, that I am placed in a very disagreeable dilemma."* Lord Grenville, thus undermined and imperfectly informed, appealed to the Cabinet against the practice of giving scraps of information to the newspapers while the negotiation was in progress.

Mr. Canning, on this occasion, writes to Lord Malmesbury: "You will, I think, have understood the meaning and intent of the resolutions of the Cabinet mentioned in my other letter of this day in the manner in which I understand it; which is, that it was devised by Lord Grenville to *tie up Pitt's tongue alone*, whom he suspected of communicating with other persons, and fortifying himself with out-of-door opinions against the opinions which might be brought forward in Council by those with whom he differed in his general view of the negotiation."†

Yet Lord Grenville, while he tried to defend himself

* "Malmesbury Correspondence," vol. iii. p. 496. † Ibid. p. 400.

against the public press, probably did not suspect that Pitt, his chief, Mr. Canning, his Under-Secretary, and Lord Malmesbury, his negotiator, were all engaged in a secret league against him. Lord Grenville had not the genius nor the eloquence of Pitt. He was deficient in knowledge of men, in conciliatory manners, in acquaintance with the statesmen of the Continent, their tempers and dispositions. But he had a manly understanding, a strong feeling for the honour of his country, and an uprightness of mind above all trick or subterfuge. He would not have condescended to practise those indirect means for defeating a colleague to which his chief had recourse. It is but too evident that Pitt's conduct on this occasion, though not unfriendly to peace, was wanting in fairness, in dignity, and in wisdom. Lord Grenville, on his side, was very unskilful. Instead of hastening the conclusion, he spun out the negotiation till the peace party in the Directory had been driven from office, and an insolent demand on the part of the new authority put an end to the fruitless discussion. Had Lord Grenville exerted himself to obtain peace with zeal and ability, there is no doubt that a better peace than the peace of Amiens might have been obtained. Nor, were it otherwise, is it by any means clear that it was worth while to continue the war from 1797 to 1801 for the sake of retaining Ceylon and Trinidad—colonies conquered by Great Britain from Holland and Spain. It is said, indeed, that Pitt was ready to restore the Cape to Holland, and if Lord Grenville had refused this concession, was prepared to accept his resignation. If such were the case, Pitt was doubtless in the right. For the real danger from France was in the extent of her territory, and the terror of her power on the Continent of Europe;

and this danger was by no means counterbalanced by the addition of a few more colonies to Great Britain in Africa and Asia. Indeed, it may be doubted whether in 1814-15, when our Government could dictate terms for our own interests, we did not retain too many colonies rather than too few under our direct dominion. The desire expressed in 1797 to deprive Spain and Holland of their colonies tended to keep them under the influence of France, while the restoration to both of all their colonial possessions, besides being an act of magnanimous justice, would have inclined them to assert their independence of France, and throw their weight on any subsequent occasion into the opposite scale. Be this as it may, the blundering course of the British Government, and the little inclination of Lord Grenville for peace, together with the insolence of the war party in France, caused the failure of the negotiation at Lille. There was much dissension at this time in the Cabinet. Mr. Windham writes in his diary of June 15th, 1797, "Renewal of Council on French affairs. Complete opposition of opinion. Pitt, Dundas, Chancellor, Lord Cornwallis, Lord Chatham, and ultimately Lord Liverpool: on the other side, Lord Grenville, Lord Spencer, Duke of Portland, myself."* Had Pitt at this time thrown over Lord Grenville and his Whig allies, he might have had peace. But an unlucky star prevailed.

* "Diary of W. Windham," p. 368.

CHAPTER L.

THE MUTINY OF THE FLEET.

WHILE millions of money were lavished without stint to purchase the co-operation of Prussia and the energy of Austria, of which the one was never fairly given and the other found to have no existence, the British navy, which had gained the brilliant victory of the 1st of June, was treated with parsimony and injustice. The pay of the seamen was regulated by Orders in Council passed in the reign of Charles II., and in despite of the great advances which had taken place in the price of every article of necessity and of comfort, the rate of pay had not been increased. The grievance was aggravated by the contrast of the increased pay granted to the army and militia.

Besides their inadequate remuneration, the sailors were also wronged by false weights and measures, and insufficient quantities of provisions.

In the year 1797 deep murmurs began to circulate among the sailors. Anonymous letters came, in the beginning of March, to Lord Howe, then recruiting his health at Bath.

But so long as these murmurs did not break out into open mutiny, the authorities, both on shore and at sea, pronounced them to be groundless, and unworthy of attention. It was plain that the wishes of British sailors did not meet

that ready acceptance which greeted the ravenous demands of Prussian and Austrian statesmen.

At length, rumours of mutiny having reached the Admiralty, orders were sent to Portsmouth that the fleet should immediately put to sea. But when the crew of the Queen Charlotte were required to lift the anchor, they refused to obey, and, running up the shrouds, gave three cheers. This signal was at once taken up by the other ships, and, in a few minutes, the command of the whole fleet was taken out of the hands of the King's officers, and committed to a body of delegates, who assembled on board the Queen Charlotte. The delegates issued strict regulations, forbade the introduction of wine and spirits, and prohibited all private communications with the shore. These mutinous proceedings soon obtained that attention which a peaceable behaviour had been ineffectual to procure. A Board of Admiralty proceeded to Portsmouth to announce a considerable increase of pay. But the mutineers were now peremptory. They demanded that the amount of pensions and provisions should be augmented, declared that other grievances must be redressed, and, finally, that until these terms should be complied with, "and his Majesty's gracious pardon granted to the fleet now lying at Spithead, the fleet would not lift an anchor; and this," they added, "is the total and final answer." These terms, coupled with the King's pardon, under the sign manual, were speedily granted, and an admiral, four captains, and seventy-nine inferior officers, were displaced from full pay on the demand of the mutineers. The sailors then returned to their duty.

So vigilant a leader of opposition as Fox was sure not to pass over unobserved scenes so full of scandal and of danger. Having mentioned the subject on the 1st of

May, he spoke again, and more severely, when, on the 5th of the same month, Pitt proposed a grant of money for the current year of 372,000*l.*, and stated the whole increase to exceed half a million a year. Fox remarked that Ministers had neither entirely granted nor entirely refused the demands of the sailors; but, by giving less than was reasonable, and endeavouring to make a bargain, had increased their suspicions. This censure was undoubtedly just. The Duke of Bedford, in the House of Lords, said the transactions were without parallel in history: there had been hitherto no instance in which the King's Ministers had entered into correspondence and negotiation with any portion of his subjects.

A new mutiny, which broke out soon after at the Nore, was the natural consequence of the manner in which the first mutineers had been treated. But these offenders, with a leader named Parker at their head, having clearly shown that their purpose was not honest, were deserted by the sailors, and, after a time, Parker and some others were arrested and hanged. Fox has been much blamed for attacking Ministers on this occasion. Yet he had pursued the same course when Lord Sandwich mismanaged the navy during the American war. Nor can there be a worse case of mal-administration than that of treating the interests of our seamen with gross neglect and silent contempt while they are obedient, and making degrading concessions when they are in a state of mutiny. Any other than the complacent Parliaments of those times would have driven from power the incompetent Ministers who lavished millions on German Sovereigns for no adequate service, and refused their due reward to the men who had ennobled and saved their country by their brilliant courage and their victorious energy.

Pitt on this occasion, as on many others, redeemed his public character by the calmness and fortitude which were habitual to him. Lord Spencer, having occasion to consult him in the middle of the night, went to his bedroom, and, having obtained his opinion, withdrew. When Lord Spencer got into the street, he recollected some point on which he had not spoken to Pitt, and hastily returned to his bedroom. To his great surprise, he found the Minister already asleep. This calm composure cannot be reckoned an accident, or attributed to physical causes. Pitt, from his first entrance into the House of Commons, showed an amount of presence of mind, and of moral courage, which enabled him to rule over the minds of others. This was his great quality, and, joined with a proud and disinterested spirit, gained for his personal conduct the respect which, by his unwise and inconsistent measures, he might otherwise have forfeited.

CHAPTER LI.

PERSONAL FEELINGS OF FOX.—MR. GREY'S MOTION ON REFORM OF PARLIAMENT.—SECESSION OF FOX AND HIS FRIENDS.

While Fox displayed, from day to day, his vast abilities in the discussion of public affairs, and held in check the prevailing tendency to place absolute power in the hands of Pitt, his own feelings recoiled from the task which a sense of duty imposed. The separation which had taken place between him and the Conservative Whigs had cut him to the heart.

With such feelings as those described in his letters of November, 1792, and August, 1794,* it is no wonder that he often wished to pursue, unburthened by public duties, a life of literature, affection, and happiness. Lord Holland tells us that in 1793 he had serious thoughts of retiring from Parliament.

In 1797, he thought the time was come when, his duty to the public having been performed with abundant zeal and energy, but without any success, his wish for retirement might be indulged without any injury to his country, and without any loss to his reputation. Neither Peace, nor Reform of Parliament, nor Abolition of the Slave Trade, appeared to be brought within reach by his greatest and loftiest efforts. Pitt, who had been the organ of the

* See pp. 7 and 65 of this volume.

friends of Parliamentary Reform, who still spoke eloquently in favour of the Abolition of the Slave Trade, and who was, in his heart, favourable to the removal of the disabilities weighing on the Roman Catholics, was chained as a galley slave to a party which resisted all those measures.

In these circumstances, Fox felt that if systematic secession was not justifiable, a lax and rare attendance was at least excusable. But before relinquishing the very forward posts he and his friends had hitherto occupied, it was thought right to test the House of Commons on some great question. Reform of Parliament was the measure fixed upon, and Mr. Grey was to be the man to propose it.

Mr. Charles Grey was one of the most upright, consistent, and virtuous statesmen who have ennobled the race of English politicians. Born of an aristocratic family, the heir to considerable landed property, of a spirit to recoil from all that was mean and base, he embraced in early life the popular principles of Fox, and adhered to them through good and ill report to the end of his life. When he first undertook the cause of Parliamentary Reform it is true he had not sufficiently considered the influence of the evil days upon which he had fallen, but when at a later period of his life he addressed himself to his great task the skies were more propitious, and he was fortunate enough to enlarge, by a temperate but efficient reform, the liberties of the people. Mr. Grey was endowed by nature with a graceful person, a lofty demeanour, an impressive voice, and a vigorous understanding. He enhanced these gifts by study, and became a good scholar, a perspicuous writer, a master of all questions of constitutional law and of foreign policy. Thus armed, he addressed the House of Commons with forcible argument conveyed in the clearest and most appropriate language.

It was on the 26th of May, 1797, that Mr. Grey brought forward his motion for Parliamentary Reform. After an able speech, showing the necessity for the measure, he explained his plan. It was apparently a very simple one. The county representation with the addition of twenty-one members was to remain nearly untouched. But the borough representation was to be reformed on the basis of dividing the cities and boroughs into four hundred separate districts, each returning one member by household suffrage. How these districts were to be formed, and whether the great towns were to have members in proportion to their population was not precisely stated, and probably had never been maturely considered. Fox's speech in this debate was one of the greatest efforts of his oratory. Taking advantage of the fact that Pitt had been, in former days, the chief leader of the Reformers, and that he had traced the evils of the American war to the want of Parliamentary Reform, Fox pointed his sarcasm at the head of the Minister now the hope and the stay of the enemies of Reform.

"We assert," he said, "that under the present form and practice of elections, we cannot expect to see any remarkable change produced by a general election. We must argue from experience. Let us look back to the period of the American war. It will not be denied by the right honourable gentleman that, towards the end of that war, it became exceedingly unpopular, and that the King's Ministers lost the confidence of the nation. In the year 1780, a dissolution took place, and then it was naturally imagined by superficial observers, who did not examine the real state of the representation, that the people would have returned a Parliament that would have unequivocally spoken their sentiments on the occasion. What was the case? I

am able to speak with considerable precision. At that time I was much more than I am at present in the way of knowing personally the individuals returned, and of making an accurate estimate of the accession gained to the popular side by that election. I can take upon me to say, that the change was very small indeed: not more than three or four persons were added to the number of those who had from the beginning opposed the disastrous career of the Ministers in that war. I remember that, upon that occasion, Lord North made use of precisely the same argument as is now brought forward: 'What!' said he, 'can you contend the war is unpopular, after the declaration in its favour that the people have made by their choice of representatives? The general election is the proof that the war continues to be the war of the people of England.' Such was the argument of Lord North, and yet it was notoriously otherwise; so notoriously otherwise, that the right honourable gentleman, the present Chancellor of the Exchequer, made a just and striking use of it, to demonstrate the necessity of a Parliamentary reform. He referred to this event as a demonstration of this doctrine.

"'You see,' said he, 'that so defective, so inadequate, is the present practice, at least of the elective franchise, that no impression of national calamity, no conviction of ministerial error, no abhorrence of disastrous war, is sufficient to stand against that corrupt influence which has mixed itself with election, and which drowns and stifles the popular voice.' Upon this statement, and upon this unanswerable argument, the right honourable gentleman acted in the year 1782. When he proposed a parliamentary reform, he did it expressly on the ground of the experience of 1780; and he made an explicit declaration, that we had no other security by which to guard ourselves against the return of the

same evils. He repeated this warning in 1783. It was the leading principle of his conduct. 'Without a reform,' said he, 'the nation cannot be safe; this war may be put an end to, but what will protect you against another? As certainly as the spirit which engendered the present war actuates the secret councils of the Crown, will you, under the influence of a defective representation, be involved again in new wars, and in similar calamities.' This was his argument in 1782, this was his prophecy, and the right honourable gentleman was a true prophet. Precisely as he pronounced it, the event happened; another war took place, and I am sure it will not be considered as an aggravation of its character, that it is at least equal in disaster to the war of which the right honourable gentleman complained. 'The defect of representation,' he said, 'is the national disease; and unless you apply a remedy directly to that disease, you must inevitably take the consequences with which it is pregnant.' With such an authority, can any man deny that I reason right? Did not the right honourable gentleman demonstrate his case? Good God! what a fate is that of the right honourable gentleman, and in what a state of whimsical contradiction does he stand! During the whole course of his administration, and particularly during the course of the present war, every prediction that he has made, every hope that he has held out, every prophecy that he has hazarded, has failed; he has disappointed the expectations that he has raised; and every promise that he has given has proved to be fallacious. Yet for these very declarations and notwithstanding these failures, we have called him a wise minister. We have given him our confidence on account of his predictions, and have continued it upon their failure. The only instance in which he really predicted what has come to pass,

we treated with stubborn incredulity. In 1785, he pronounced the awful prophecy: 'Without a parliamentary reform, the nation will be plunged into new wars; without a parliamentary reform, you cannot be safe against bad Ministers, nor can even good Ministers be of use to you.' Such was his prediction; and it has come upon us. It would seem as if the whole life of the right honourable gentleman from that period had been destined by Providence for the illustration of his warning. If I were disposed to consider him as a real enthusiast, and a bigot in divination, we might be apt to think that he had himself taken measures for the verification of his prophecy. For he might now exclaim to us, 'You see the consequence of not listening to the oracle! I told you what would happen. It is true that your destruction is complete. I have plunged you into a new war; I have exhausted you as a people; I have brought you to the brink of ruin; but I told you beforehand what would happen; I told you that without a reform in the representation of the people, no Minister, however wise, could save you: you denied me my means, and you take the consequence!'"*

Turning, then, to the nature of the reform proposed, he denied that it would produce a pure democracy.

"An honourable baronet," he said, "spoke of the instability of democracies, and says that history does not give us the example of one that has lasted eighty years. Sir, I am not speaking of pure democracies, and therefore his allusion does not apply to my argument. Eighty years, however, of peace and repose would be pretty well for any people to enjoy, and would be no bad recommendation of a pure democracy. I am ready, however, to agree with the honourable baronet, that, according to the experience of history, the

* "Fox's Speeches," vol. vi. p. 349.

ancient democracies of the world were vicious and objectionable on many accounts; their instability, their injustice, and many other vices cannot be overlooked; but surely, when we turn to the ancient democracies of Greece—when we see them in all the splendour of arts and of arms—when we see to what an elevation they carried the powers of man, it cannot be denied that, however vicious on the score of ingratitude and of injustice, they were, at least, the pregnant source of national strength, and that in particular they brought forth this strength in a peculiar manner in the moment of difficulty and distress. When we look at the democracies of the ancient world, we are compelled to acknowledge their oppressions to their dependencies, their horrible acts of injustice and of ingratitude to their own citizens; but they compel us also to admiration of their vigour, their constancy, their spirit, and their exertions in every great emergency in which they were called upon to act. We are compelled to own that it gives a power of which no other form of government is capable. Why? Because it incorporates every man with the State; because it arouses everything that belongs to the soul as well as to the body of man; because it makes every individual feel that he is fighting for himself and not for another; that it is his own cause, his own safety, his own concern, his own dignity on the face of the earth, and his own interest on the identical soil which he has to maintain; and accordingly we find that whatever may be objected to them on account of the turbulency of the passions which they engender, their short duration, and their disgusting vices, they have exacted from the common suffrage of mankind the palm of strength and vigour. Who that reads the history of the Persian war—what boy, whose heart is warmed by the grand and sublime actions which the democratic spirit produced—does not find in this

principle the key to all the wonders which were achieved at Thermopylæ and elsewhere, and of which the recent and marvellous acts of the French people are pregnant examples? He sees that the principle of liberty only could create the sublime and irresistible emotion: and it is in vain to deny, from the striking illustration that our own times have given, that the principle is eternal, and that it belongs to the heart of man. Shall we, then, refuse to take the benefit of this invigorating principle? Shall we refuse to take the benefit which the wisdom of our ancestors resolved that it should confer on the British constitution? With the knowledge that it can be reinfused into our system without violence, without disturbing any one of its parts, are we become so inert, so terrified, or so stupid as to hesitate for one hour to restore ourselves to the health which it would be sure to give? When we see the giant power that it confers upon others, we ought not to withhold it from Great Britain. How long is it since we were told in this House that France was a blank in the map of Europe, and that she lay an easy prey to any Power that might be disposed to divide and plunder her! Yet we see that, by the mere force and spirit of this principle, France has brought all Europe to her feet. Without disguising the vices of France—without overlooking the horrors that have been committed, and that have tarnished the glory of the Revolution—it cannot be denied that they have exemplified the doctrine, that if you wish for power you must look to liberty. If ever there was a moment when this maxim ought to be dear to us it is the present. We have tried all other means; we have had recourse to every stratagem that artifice, that influence, that cunning could suggest; we have addressed ourselves to all the base passions of the nation; we have addressed ourselves to pride, to

avarice, to fear; we have awakened all the interested emotions; we have employed everything that flattery, everything that address, everything that privilege could effect; we have tried to terrify them into energy, and all has been unequal to our emergency. Let us try them by the only means which experience demonstrates to be invincible; let us address ourselves to their love; let us identify them with ourselves; let us make it their own cause as well as ours! To induce them to come forward in support of the State, let us make them a part of the State; and this they become the very instant you give them a House of Commons that is the faithful organ of their will. Then, sir, when you have made them believe and feel that there can be but one interest in the country, you will never call upon them in vain for exertion. Can this be the case as the House is now constituted? Can they think so if they review the administration of the right hon. gentleman, every part of which must convince them that the present representation is a mockery and a shadow?" *

Speaking of the plan proposed, he said he thought that to extend the right of election to householders was the best plan of reform, and the most perfect recurrence to first principles. "I do not mean to the first principles of society nor the abstract principles of representation, but to the first known and recorded principles of our constitution." "It is the opinion of the celebrated Glanville, that in all cases where no particular right intervenes, the common-law right of paying scot and lot is the right of election of the land. This, sir, was the opinion of Serjeant Glanville, and of one of the most celebrated committees of which our parliamentary history can boast." "That I take to be the most perfect system," he said later, "which shall include the greatest

* "Fox's Speeches," vol. vi. p. 353.

number of independent electors, and exclude the greatest number of those who are by their situation dependent." He thought the number of voters would be about 600,000—a number sufficiently extensive for deliberation on the one hand, and yet sufficiently limited for order on the other. At the end of his speech, Fox said he desired to see a change of Ministers, but that he had no desire to form a part of any new Administration.

The House divided:

Ayes	91
Noes	256
Majority against . . .	165

This was for some time the close of Fox's efforts in Parliament.

CHAPTER LII.

DEATH AND CHARACTER OF BURKE, 1797.

In this year died Edmund Burke, one of the greatest men whom the United Kingdom has produced. With a fertility of fancy sufficient to make a poet of the rank of Milton, and a power of general reasoning which might have furnished a philosopher of the rank of Bacon, he devoted these rare gifts to political pursuits. He was not indeed the ivory paper-knife which Swift considers as the true measure of sharpness of intellect for a practical statesman, and was rather the razor to which Goldsmith compares him. Thus it was his fate to propound lessons of political wisdom and enlightened policy to minds incapable of fathoming his doctrines, or of appreciating the extent of his views. So that, when his exposition of the elementary doctrines of political economy was heard by Lord Chatham, he was supposed by that great man to be incurably wild and unpractical. Thus, also, when, in his magnificent speech on conciliation with America, he pointed out the path by which three millions of people might be won back to allegiance, he was scoffed at and despised by the narrow intellects of the Ministers of the Crown, and the venal souls of the majority of the House of Commons. He said very truly that when he showed zeal for

some great public object, he was supposed to be working for some private object of his own.

> "Too deep for his hearers, he went on refining,
> And thought of convincing when they thought of dining."

Nor did he fare better with the inhabitants of a great commercial city than with the blinded Court, or the corrupt House of Commons. His knowledge of the wrongs of Ireland, and his wish to remove them, together with his foresight of the fatal issue of the quarrel with our American colonies, lost him the attachment of Bristol, and he was indebted to the patronage of Lord Rockingham for a seat at Malton.

Two great defects were inherent in Burke; the one of mind, the other of temper.

The fault of his mind was that imagination was allowed to prevail over judgment, and the fault of his temper was a want of patience, justly considered by Pitt the most necessary quality in the character of a British statesman. Thus, having his indignation roused by the violence, cruelty, and treachery of our Indian Government towards the natives, he clothed the splendid ceremonies of the Hindu superstition with all the colours of his fancy, and giving a character of sanctity to heathen idols, inveighed against the crimes of Hastings with acrimony and exaggeration.

These defects of Burke found copious aliment in the events of the French Revolution. The flagrant immorality of the French nobility, the notorious infidelity of the French clergy, the levity and culpable frivolity of the Queen of France, found in him not a lenient and equitable judge, but a passionate advocate. He conjured up a vision of political virtue, of moral purity, and of social harmony which had no existence among the society of monarchical France. As events proceeded the follies of the honest

promoters of the revolution; the brutal cruelties of the ambitious demagogues; the recklessness with which the Church was not reformed but overthrown; the aristocracy not chastised, but exterminated; the mixture of vanity and ferocity; the injustice practised towards the King; the servility shown by the Assembly to the mob of Paris; the insults offered to women of high station and pure reputation; the overthrow of religion; the massacres perpetrated daily in the capital, the chief cities, towns, and rural districts—all these things completely unsettled the mind of Burke, and drove him into a state of frenzy in which all control from reason was lost.

In this wreck of his judgment, and extreme irritation of his temper, he urged on war in behalf of the Bourbons, and would have had his country oppose the preternatural strength which the French people derived from their insanity by a fury no less insane. Speaking of this period of Burke's career, Pitt was wont to say: "He was very mad at that time." It was a madness of which Pitt at no time partook; but it is no wonder that when the violence of the storm had driven from their moorings intellects the most firmly anchored, the mind of Burke, never remarkable for stability, should have been at the mercy of the tempest. When, at last, he became as he described himself, a hulk utterly broken up, he received a pension from the king. Fully had he deserved this poor provision for his old age from those who were entitled to dispense the bounty of the Crown and of the nation. For he was a good as well as a great man; he had served faithfully the interests of his country, was a brilliant and eloquent writer, and a discriminating and profound admirer of his country's constitution.

His works will be read with interest and with profit so

long as England shall be a nation, and so long as the English language shall be known.

The first of those works, which is much read, is the treatise on the "Sublime and Beautiful." Its chief merit consists in its apt classical quotations. He had not very carefully studied nature, but he knew the poets, and delighted in the images which poets paint so well.

The "Thoughts on the Causes of the Present Discontents" is an essay which contains a masterly view of the prerogative policy of George III.

It was this policy which, artfully directed by a shrewd and watchful prince, set one faction against another till all were bent or broken by the inflexible will and subtle policy of the sovereign.

Of Burke's published speeches, Fox used to say that it was common to charge Burke with want of judgment, but that those who had heard his speeches must confess that nothing could be more judicious than the selection of his best speeches for publication, and the omission of passages which, when spoken, had offended his hearers.

The speech on conciliation with America is perhaps the finest recorded speech in the English language. Yet, notwithstanding the *dictum* of Fox, I regret the loss of the speech on the employment of Indians, of which Horace Walpole says: "Wonderful speech of Burke on Burgoyne's invitation to Indians; his wit made North, Rigby, and Ministers laugh; his pathos drew tears down Barré's cheeks."*

The "Reflections on the French Revolution," and the subsequent pamphlets of Burke, while they contain passages of large philosophy, and still more of brilliant description, and caustic invective, are all tinged with that

* "Correspondence," vol. i. p. 171.

dark horror of the French revolution, which made him look upon war against the French Republic as a duty to the religion, morality, and social order of Europe. He never perceived that crimes and disorders so wild and irrational must have some adequate cause, and must also in no long process of time, if let alone, cure themselves.

The old monarchy of France, which Burke worshipped as an idol, was a compound of all that was corrupt in politics, infidel in religion, and profligate in morals.

In 1774, Burke failed in the patriotic task of inducing England to be reconciled to her American children; in 1792, he succeeded but too well in exciting her to rush into a long and bloody war with her nearest neighbour.

"L'homme est de feu pour le mensonge,
Il est de glace pour la vérité."

LA FONTAINE.

CHAPTER LIII.

IRELAND, 1798.

WHEN four leading men of the Whig party were admitted into the Ministry of Pitt some of his friends expressed an apprehension that he was creating an opposition to his policy, and might be out-voted in his own Cabinet. This fear he treated with scorn, saying he felt no anxiety on that account, since he placed much dependence on his new colleagues, and still more on himself.* It seems, however, that upon one subject the new colleagues of Pitt hoped to effect a change in his policy. Burke had always been an advocate for concessions to the Roman Catholics of Ireland, and the Duke of Portland, when Lord Lieutenant, had represented in that country a policy of conciliation.

The Marquis of Buckingham had received on the question of the Regency the support of a party, whose bond of union was Protestant ascendancy, and Lord Westmoreland, the reigning Lord Lieutenant, was the organ and symbol of that party.

Suddenly there came a rumour that Lord Westmoreland was to give way to Lord Fitzwilliam, and that Lord Fitzwilliam had openly avowed to Mr. Grattan and Mr. Ponsonby both his expectation of succeeding Lord Westmoreland,

* "Life of Lord Sidmouth," vol. i. p. 120.

and his determination in that case of changing the policy of repression and intolerance for a system of mildness and religious freedom.

The statements as to the facts of the arrangement differ so widely as make it almost impossible to reconcile them.

Lord Grenville, writing to his brother at Vienna, on the 15th of October, 1794, states that he had heard with infinite surprise the rumours just mentioned; that upon inquiry it was found to be the truth, that Lord Fitzwilliam had written in the sense supposed to Mr. Ponsonby and Mr. Grattan, and had given them reason to think that the Chancellor (Fitzgibbon) would be one of the first persons removed.

As the Chancellor had strenuously supported Pitt and Lord Buckingham on the question of the Regency, it was felt by Lord Grenville that the consent to sacrifice him would be a step dishonourable and degrading to Pitt and himself.

Lord Grenville continues his letter in these words:

"On every principle therefore of duty and character, we are obliged to say that we cannot consent to this step, and we can only regret that if it was originally intended, so capital a feature in the new arrangement was not brought forth earlier. The same observation applies to the whole idea of holding out a new system of men and measures in Ireland. If that was meant before the junction was made, it ought surely to have been stated then, in order that we might judge whether it did not oppose an insurmountable bar to the whole scheme."*

Every one will agree with Lord Grenville in this remark.

Lord Holland on the other hand says that Mr. Grattan and the Irish patriots might think themselves justified in not resisting the war, as the question had already been decided

* "Courts and Cabinets," vol. ii. p. 315.

in England, and as by waiving objections they might obtain some advantages for their own country. "That they had such expectations," continues Lord Holland, "cannot be doubted. They were distinctly encouraged in them by the Duke of Portland—'at least, we have secured the Catholics,' said he to some English friends; and he did not scruple to affirm to Mr. Grattan that his chief object in taking office was to secure the objects which the Irish Whigs had pursued, and a large share of power and patronage to their party. Nearly thus did Lord Fitzwilliam understand it."*

Burke was deeply grieved at this schism in Pitt's councils. He looked to Pitt as the only man who could save the country. But he loved and respected Lord Fitzwilliam and those who had joined the Ministry. He could see no remedy for the breach but the resignation or dismissal of the Duke of Portland and Lord Fitzwilliam. With these feelings, he thus writes to Mr. Windham:

"You are better acquainted than I am with the terms, actual or understood, upon which the Duke of Portland, acting for himself and others, accepted office. I know nothing of them but by a single conversation with him. From thence I learned that (whether authorized or not), he considered without a doubt that the administration of Ireland was left wholly to him, and without any other reserves than what are supposed in every wise and sober servant of the Crown. Lord Fitzwilliam, I know, conceived things exactly in that manner, and proceeded as if there was no controversy whatever on the subject. He hesitated long whether he should take the station; but when he agreed to it, he thought he had obliged the Ministry, and done what was pleasant to the King, in going into an office of great difficulty and heavy responsibility."

* "Memoirs of the Whig Party," vol. i. p. 74.

Again: "I think I know what a Lord Lieutenant of Ireland is, or I know nothing. . . . Lord Fitzwilliam is a high-minded man, a man of very great parts, and of very quick feelings. He cannot be the instrument of the junto, with the name of the King's representative, if he would. If Lord Fitzwilliam was to be sent to Ireland to act exactly as Lord Westmoreland does, I undertake to say, that a worse choice for that purpose could not be made. . . . Lord Fitzwilliam has no business there at all; he has fortune enough; he has rank enough. Here he is infinitely more at his ease, and he is of infinitely more use here than he can be there, where his desire of really doing business, and his desire of being the real representative of the Crown, would only cause him infinite trouble and distress. For it is not to know Ireland to say, that what is called opposition is what will give trouble to a real Viceroy. His embarrassments are upon the part of those who ought to be the supports of English government, but who have formed themselves into a cabal to destroy the King's authority, and to divide the country as a spoil among one another. *Non regnum sed magnum latrocinium* is the motto which ought to be put under the harp. . . . I love Lord Fitzwilliam very well, but so convinced am I, on the maturest reflection, of the perilous state into which the present junto have brought that kingdom, (on which, in reality, this kingdom at this juncture is dependent), that if he were to go with a resolution to support it, I would on my knees entreat him not to have a share in the ruin of his country, under the poor pretence of governing a part of it."*

Again, in writing on October 16th, respecting the junto which governed Ireland, Burke says: "I should have made

* "Diary of W. Windham," p. 322, *et seq.*

a great scruple of conscience to do anything whatever for the support, directly or indirectly, of a set of men in Ireland who, that conscience well informed tells me, by their innumerable corruptions, frauds, oppressions, and follies, are opening a back door for Jacobinism to rush in and to take us in the rear. As surely as you and I exist, so surely this will be the consequence of their persisting in their system."*

The immediate rent was patched up: Lord Fitzwilliam went to Ireland and dismissed several of the junto; they raised a piteous cry of distress; Pitt took their part; Lord Fitzwilliam was recalled; the Duke of Portland deserted him, and as Burke had foretold, the Jacobins rushed in and took us in the rear. The melancholy history of the Irish Rebellion; the burnings, the tortures, and the outrages by which it was fanned into a flame by the Government; the barbarous cruelties by which it was accompanied on the part of the insurgents, form no part of my subject, and I am glad to save myself and my readers the painful details. Yet there is one person, a young man of singular merit and singular enthusiasm, a near relation of Fox, whose fate deserves some record in these volumes.

Lord Edward Fitzgerald was the fifth son of the Duke of Leinster. Entering early into the army, he became a skilful officer, and was beloved by all who knew him. The following testimony to his merit cannot be impeached. Major Doyle, who served with him in America, thus speaks of him: "Of my lamented and ill-fated friend's excellent qualities I should never tire in speaking. I never knew so loveable a person; and every man in the army, from the general to the drummer, would cheer the expression. His frank and open manner, his universal benevolence, his *gaieté de cœur*, his

* "Diary of W. Windham," p. 329.

valour, almost chivalrous, and, above all, his unassuming tone, made him the idol of all who served with him. He had great animal spirits, which bore him up against all fatigue; but his courage was entirely independent of those spirits—it was a valour *sui generis*. Had fortune happily placed him in a situation, however difficult, where he could *legitimately* have brought those varied qualities into play, I am confident he would have proved a proud ornament to his country."*

Lord Edward married early in life, after a month's courtship, Pamela, supposed to be the daughter of Madame de Genlis and the Duke of Orleans. His letters to his mother during his early married life, show the warm, simple, and affectionate nature of his character. In April, 1793, he writes:

"DEAREST MOTHER,—I have been very idle, and so has my dear little wife, but I hope you will forgive us. She is afraid you are angry with her. The truth is, the sitting up so late has made us late in the morning; and we get on so agreeably, and chatter so much in the morning, that the day is over before we know where we are. Dublin has been very gay; a great number of balls, of which the lady misses none. Dancing is a great passion with her. I wish you could see her dance, you would delight in it, she dances so with all her heart and soul. Everybody seems to like her, and behave civilly and kindly to her. We have not been able yet to go to Castletown to stay, but intend going there next week. I had one very pleasant day with dear aunt Louisa,† and had a long talk about you, which was not the least pleasant part of it. We have been four or five times to Frascati, but the weather has been too cold to enjoy it well. You know what a difference that makes in everything with me.

* Moore's "Memoir of Lord E. Fitzgerald," p. 26. † Lady Louisa Conolly.

Pray tell Ogilvie I have deferred speaking to Byrne till the spring was a little more advanced, to show it in beauty to him. If the weather comes mild, I shall go and stay there, for I long for a little country, and a little fine weather.

"There is nothing going on in the House, and I believe *our Reform* will not take us long, so that, I suppose, Dublin will soon be empty. I find, by your letter, that people are as violent about politics in London as they are here, which is pretty well. My differing so very much in opinion with the people that one is unavoidably obliged to live with here, does not add much, as you may guess, to the agreeableness of Dublin society. But I have followed my dear mother's advice, and do not talk much on the subject, and when I do, am very cool. It certainly is the best way; but all my prudence does not hinder all sorts of stories being made about both my wife and me, some of which, I am afraid, have frightened you, dearest mother. It is rather hard that when, with a wish to avoid disputing, one sees and talks only to a few people of one's own way of thinking, we are at once all set down as a nest of traitors. From what you know of me, you may guess all this has not much changed my opinions; but I keep very quiet, do not go out much, except to see my wife dance, and, in short, keep my breath to cool my porridge.

"Your affectionate son,

"E. F." *

Again:

"Frascati, April 27th, 1793.

"Ogilvie will have glorious weather for his journey. I shall be delighted to see him; he does quite right to come.

* "Memoirs," vol. i. p. 221.

I believe Lord W. only waits to see him to settle about Frascati. Mrs. S., whom I saw yesterday, told me he was now determined on taking it. He has been shilli-shally about it lately, but is now fixed; this makes me, at last, look about me. I have heard of a place in the county of Wicklow which I think will do for me. A Mr. Magennis had it, and the description he gives of it is delightful; in a beautiful country between Wicklow and Arklow, a small house, with forty acres of land, some trees upon it, near the sea side, evergreens, the most beautiful, growing upon the rocks, the rent £90 a year. We are going to see that, and some other places that are to be let to-morrow. We go to Newbridge, twenty-six miles from this, and mean to stay three days there to look about us.

"I have heard a beautiful description of that part of the county of Wicklow, and every thing lets cheaper than about the parts we know. I think I shall like anything in the county of Wicklow better than Leinster Lodge or Kildare, the country is so much more beautiful; and, when one is to settle, why not choose a pretty spot and pretty country? I think it is worth while paying a little more rent, and, if necessary, curtailing in other things, as in servants or horses. I own also I like *not* to be Lord Edward Fitzgerald, 'the county of Kildare member,' &c., &c., to be bored with 'this one is your brother's friend,' 'that man voted against him,' &c. In short, by what I hear of this place, I shall be very quiet, not a gentleman nearer me than six miles, except a young Mr. Tighe, whom I like.

"I am a little ashamed when I reason, and say to myself, 'Leinster Lodge would be the most profitable. Ninety persons of one hundred would choose it, and be delighted to get it.' It is, to be sure, in a good country, plentiful, affords

everything a person wants, but it has not mountains and rocks, and *I do* like mountains and rocks, and pretty views, and pretty hedges, and pretty cabins, ay, and a pleasanter people. In short, I shall certainly, I think, fix on the Wicklow place, that is, if I like it. If not, I shall take some place that is to be let for the summer, or by the month, to go to from here.

"Poor Frascati! I shall be sorry to leave it. I look at all the trees and places with regret. I hope, however, to see everything blossom before I go, for two or three days more will bring all the lilacs out completely. My dear little wife is very well—goes on delightfully. I never saw her look so well, she grows both broad and long; indeed, she has quite taken a fit of growing."*

"Frascati, May 6th, 1793.

"DEAREST MOTHER,—Wife and I are come to settle here. We came last night, got up to a delightful spring day, and are now enjoying the little book-room, with the windows open, hearing the birds sing, and the place looking beautiful. The plants in the passage are just watered, and with the passage door open, the room smells like a green-house. Pamela has dressed four beautiful flower-pots, and is now working at her frame, while I write to my dearest mother; and upon the two little stands there are six pots of fine auriculas, and I am sitting in the bay window, with all those pleasant feelings which the fine weather, the pretty place, the singing birds, the pretty wife, and Frascati gives me—with your last dear letter to my wife before me:—so you may judge how I love you at this moment. Yes, dearest mother, I am delighted at the Malvern party, and I am determined to meet you there, or

* "Memoirs," vol. i. p. 224.

wherever you are. I dote on being with you anywhere, but particularly in the country, as I think we always enjoy one another's company there more than in town. I long for a little walk with you, leaning on me, or to have a talk with you, sitting out in some pretty spot, of a fine day, with your long cane in your hand, working at some little weed at your feet, and looking down, talking all the time. I won't go on in this way, for I should want to set out directly, and that cannot be, so I shall give you some account of what we have been doing."*

"Frascati, February 6th, 1794.

"I have got an under-gardener (myself) to prepare some spots for flowers, and to help Tim. I have been hard at work to-day and part of yesterday (by-the-by, weather so hot, I go without coat, and the birds singing like spring) cleaning the little corner to the right of the house, digging round roots of trees, raking ground, and planting thirteen two-year old laurels and Portugal laurels. I have also trimmed the rose trees. The flowers and shrubs had all got out of the little green paling; I am now putting them inside, and mean only to have a border of primroses and polyanthus outside, if I have any. I mean from thence to go to the rosary, and then to the little new-planted corner. I am to have hyacinths, jonquils, pinks, cloves, narcissuses, &c., in little beds before the house, and in the rosary. Some parts of the long round require a great deal of pruning, and trees to be cut; if you trust me I think I could do it prudently and have the wood laid by. There are numbers of trees quite spoiling one another.

"God bless you, dear mother, I am now going to make my gardener work, for he does nothing if I am not with him.

* "Memoirs," vol. i. p. 226.

Pamela sends you her love; hers and mine to all the rest. Bless you all: this is too fine a day to stay longer writing. I wish to God you were here. If you want anything done, tell me; if you like what I am doing tell me; if you like the part of the house you have taken, tell me."

"Frascati, February 19th, 1794.

. . . . . .

"I live here constantly. Pam has not been in town since we came. She goes to the manufacturers' ball on Friday. She is quite well, eats, drinks, and sleeps well; she works a great deal, and I read to her. I have left off gardening, for I hated that all my troubles should go for that vile Lord W——, and my flowers to be for aides-de-camp, chaplains, and all such followers of a lord-lieutenant."

"Kildare, June 23rd, 1794.

"DEAREST MOTHER,—I write to you in the middle of settling and arranging my little family here. But the day is fine, the spot looks pretty, quiet, and comfortable. I feel pleasant, contented, and happy, and all these feelings and sights never come across me without bringing dearest dearest mother to my heart's recollection. I am sure you understand these feelings, dear mother. How you would like this little spot! It is the smallest thing imaginable, and to numbers would have no beauty; but there is a comfort and moderation in it that delights me. I don't know how I can describe it to you, but I will try.

"After going up a little lane, and in at a close gate, you come on a little white house, with a small gravel court before it. You see but three small windows, the court surrounded by large old elms; one side of the house covered with shrubs, on the other side a tolerable large ash; upon the stairs going up to the house, two wicker cages, in which there are at this

moment two thrushes singing *à gorge deployée.* In coming into the house you find a small passage-hall, very clean, the floor tiled; upon your left, a small room; on the right the staircase. In front you come into the parlour, a good room, with a bow-window looking into the garden, which is a small green plot surrounded by good trees, and in it three of the finest thorns I ever saw, and all the trees so placed that you may shade yourself from the sun all hours of the day; the bow-window, covered with honeysuckle, and up to the window some roses.

"Going up stairs you find another bow-room, the honeysuckle almost up to it, and a little room the same size as that below; this, with a kitchen or servants' hall below, is the whole house.

"There is, on the left, in the courtyard, another building which makes a kitchen; it is covered by trees, so as to look pretty; at the back of it, there is a yard, &c., which looks into a lane. On the side of the house opposite the grass-plot there is ground enough for a flower garden, communicating with the front garden by a little walk."*

To drive a man of such "a constant, noble, loving nature" into the crime of rebellion would seem to have been a difficult task. To the first overtures of French agents—namely, one sent over in 1793, and a Dr. Jackson, who was arrested on his landing in Ireland—Lord Edward turned a deaf ear. For some time his views seem not to have gone beyond plans of Parliamentary Reform in concert with the English Whigs led by Fox. But the measures of coercion introduced by the Irish Government, the total rejection of all Mr. Grattan's motions for reform, and finally the recall of Lord Fitzwilliam drove all the more ardent lovers of freedom to

* "Memoirs," vol. i. pp. 237–241.

despair, and presently to conspiracy, to treason, and to rebellion. *Non regnum sed magnum latrocinium* was the character Burke gave of the Irish Government, and of the system which he said would drive the Irish into Jacobinism. Such, however, was the system which Pitt sanctioned, a system of proscription, of corruption, and of cruelty. Mr. Secretary Pelham declared that "the exclusion of Catholics from the parliament and the state was necessary for the crown and the connexion."

"Eternal and indefeasible proscription," exclaimed Mr. Grattan, "denounced by a minister of the Crown against three-fourths of His Majesty's subjects. . . . But the member may rely on it, the Catholic, the Irish, will not long submit to such an interdict; they will not suffer a stranger to tell us on what proud terms English Government will consent to rule in Ireland, still less to pronounce and dictate the incapacity of the natives as the terms of her dominion, and the base condition of our connexion and allegiance."*

But, besides these haughty declarations, the Government of Ireland purposely goaded the Irish people into rebellion.

"It has been said," remarked Grattan, in his speech on General Lake's proclamation, "that it were better the people should proceed to violence, nay, it has been said in so many words, 'It were to be wished they would rebel.' Good God! wished they would rebel! Here is the system, and the principle of the system. From corruption to coercion, and so on to military execution, accompanied with a declaration, that it were to be wished the people would go into rebellion!"

Mr. Grattan and his parliamentary friends were prudent enough to keep within the limits of legality. Lord Edward

* "Life of Lord Edward Fitzgerald," vol. i. p. 277.

Fitzgerald, Arthur O'Connor, Wolfe Tone, and many others, fell into the snare, and gratified the Irish junto by sharing in a plot to overturn the Government of England in Ireland by the aid of the French Republic.

I do not propose to go any further into this sickening history. Lord Edward Fitzgerald committed himself deeply, and was too earnest in the cause to consult his personal safety. Betrayed by a spy or unfaithful friend, he attempted resistance, was shot by Major Sirr in the arm, with a view to effect his capture, and, after thirteen days in prison, died of a fever brought on by his wound.

The conduct of the Government, even after they had caught their victim, was cruel and tyrannical. They refused his relations the privilege of seeing him when living, and they brought in a bill of attainder to deprive his widow and his children of their inheritance after he had ceased to live!

The comment of Sir Ralph Abercromby shows how a brave and humane man judged the proceedings of the Irish Government. Speaking of the army under his command, he said: "That it was in a state of licentiousness which must render it formidable to every one but the enemy."*

Pitt's connection with the great Tory party made it easy for him to proscribe the Roman Catholics; to torture the suspected; to burn the houses of the peasantry. But when he sought to admit the Roman Catholics to Parliament and to office, to conciliate the priests, and to consult the welfare of the people of Ireland, the same Tory party, headed

* See the excellent memoir of Sir Ralph Abercomby, by his son, Lord Dunfermline. The author says truly that the documents he publishes prove that "the commander of the army was the steady and consistent vindicator of the authority of the civil power, while the Government were the zealous and watchful advocates of military rule, and of the uncontrolled license of the troops."—"Memoir of Lieut.-Gen. Sir Ralph Abercromby," by his son Lord Dunfermline, p. 93.

by the King, put an insuperable bar in the way of his endeavours. Yet, wicked and detestable as were the measures of the Irish Government, no one can blame them for putting down by force the insurgents who sought to separate Ireland from England. In 1690, King William carried an army to Ireland to defeat King James, who was, possibly, the choice of the majority of the Irish people; in 1793, the French Convention put down, not only by force, but with ferocity, the efforts of Lyons and Toulon to set up a separate government; in 1798, animated by the same instinct of self-preservation, the English Government subdued the Irish rebels, but in doing so they acted with a cruelty that ill became a civilized nation and an established government.

CHAPTER LIV.

FOX'S MODE OF LIFE DURING THE SECESSION, 1797-1800.

AFTER his great effort on Parliamentary Reform, Fox, as he had announced, gave nearly his whole time to study and private enjoyment, scarcely any to political discussion.

In coming to this decision, his mind had been much agitated, but his heart beat strongly in favour of retirement. In argument, he was obliged to admit that secession was either, as Pitt described it, a retreat to the Mons Sacer with a view to demand by force what had not been yielded to persuasion, or a voluntary abandonment of the pursuit of the great objects of his public life.

Thus embarrassed, Fox was eager to declare that his secession was not systematic. Already, in the month of August, he writes to his nephew: "Pray, if you have an opportunity of talking about the Secession, say what is the truth, that there was not agreement of opinion enough upon the subject to make it possible to take what one may call a *measure* upon the subject; but that most of us thought, that, after the proposition for reform, we might fairly enough stay away, considering the preceding events of the Session, and the behaviour of Parliament upon them."*

* "Correspondence," vol. iii. p. 136.

Yet in the following November on an intimation from Lord Lauderdale that, in the Duke of Bedford's opinion, he ought to attend on the first day of the Session, he says, "My own is so much the other way that I shall scarcely bring myself to give it up. . . . That secession is a measure liable enough to misconstruction I admit, but that was considered, I suppose, before we absented ourselves last Session; and if ever there is a time when secession is like to have any effect upon the public, it is at the beginning of a Session. Absence at other times passes only for less vigour and activity."*

Lord Lansdowne was one of those who most disapproved secession. He said to Lord Holland: "Is your uncle aware of what he is doing? Secession means rebellion, or it is nonsense." Yet in November Fox writes to his nephew:

"I am glad to hear Lansdowne, at last, approves of our secession; whether it will ever produce any effect I know not; but I own I think it has a better chance of doing so than attendance; mind, I mean *my* attendance, for I think the more any new ones show themselves the better; and I shall be very sorry if Moira makes his motion when you cannot attend it." †

Fox's life during the Secession was spent almost entirely at St. Anne's Hill. He loved that place with a passionate fondness. His house was not large, but comfortable and convenient. The position is beautiful, and he took such interest in the garden that in one of his manuscript volumes he inserted a catalogue of all the flowers cultivated in it. Some fine trees grow in the shrubbery. The

* "Correspondence," vol. iii. p. 274. † Ibid. p. 138.

house stands on an eminence commanding a wide and varied prospect, of which the Thames, flowing beneath the hill, forms a striking and agreeable feature. Shrubs planted with taste and judgment, and bowers and rustic arches of honeysuckle and roses adorned the lawns and walks near the house. About thirty acres of land formed the whole domain, but the part of the hill which rises above the house was left as a common, and with its gorse and heath diversified by its wildness the cultivated scenery of the valley below.

The habits of Fox were simple and studious. In summer, he rose between six and seven; in winter, before eight. He breakfasted between eight and nine in summer; a little after nine in winter. At breakfast, the chief news of the day was read aloud, generally by Fox. He also read out such parts of his private letters as did not require secrecy, and commented with freedom, but without acrimony, on political events. After breakfast, he usually read some Italian poet with Mrs. Fox, and then till dinner-time pursued his own studies. These were generally directed to poetry; of poets he preferred the Greek, and of Greek poets, Homer to all others. Mrs. Fox says, in one of her letters, that he read as much Greek as Dr. Parr, and would get through two or three books of Homer in a morning.

His dinner hour was half-past two or three o'clock in summer, and four in winter. In summer, after a few glasses of wine and a cup of coffee, he walked out, conversing with any friend who happened to be an inmate of the house. After tea, reading in history commenced, chiefly with a view to a work he was projecting on the Revolution of 1688. At ten, a light supper of fruit and pastry was brought

in, and at half-past ten the host and his family retired to rest.*

There can be no doubt that Fox enjoyed this period of retirement and literary study more than any other part of his life. He was a man without malignity, envy, or the sordid parts of ambition; his fame as an orator could hardly be increased; he loved his wife with a devoted affection which was as fondly returned, and his passion for poetry, for flowers, and for a rural life was intense. "A good critic," says Burke, in one of his political pamphlets, "and there is none better than Mr. Fox," &c. If Burke was a fit judge of Fox's qualifications as a critic, I feel sure I shall be excused for giving copious extracts from his letters on the subject of Greek and Latin poets—the great models of Milton and of Tasso, though not of Shakespeare, Dante, and Ariosto.

In 1796, the celebrated Greek scholar, Gilbert Wakefield, dedicated to Fox, in very complimentary terms, his edition of Lucretius. This incident gave rise to a correspondence between them, in which Fox's opinions on ancient literature are given in a simple and unaffected manner. He writes to Gilbert Wakefield on the 30th January, 1798: "I am at present rather engaged in reading Greek, as it is my wish to recover, at least, if not to improve, my former acquaintance with that language." This is followed by a controversy, in which the tone of Fox is rather one of inquiry than of positive opinions. He had asked Mr. Wakefield, in one of his letters, the following question: "I cannot refuse myself taking the opportunity of asking your opinion relative to the twenty-fourth 'Iliad,' whether it is Homer's or not?" In

* These details are taken from Trotter's "Memoirs of Fox."

answer to a paper of observations by Wakefield, he writes as follows:

"St. Anne's Hill, February 23rd, 1798.

"Sir,—Nothing but your stating yourself to be in some degree at leisure now could justify my troubling you with the long and, perhaps, unintelligible scrawl which I send with this. I most probably have shown much ignorance, and certainly some presumption, in seeming to dispute with you, upon points of which you know so much, and I so little: all I can say in my defence is, that disputing is sometimes a way of learning.

"I have not said anything yet upon the question which you seem to have thought most upon—whether the Iliad is the work of one or more authors? I have, for the sake o argument, admitted it; but yet, I own, I have great doubts, and even lean to an opinion different from yours. I am sure the inequality of excellence is not greater than in 'Paradise Lost,' and many other poems written confessedly by one author. I will own to you, also, that in one, only, of the instances of inequality which you state, I agree with you. Até is detestable, but I cannot think as you do of the death of Hector. There are parts of that book, and those closely connected with the death of Hector, which I cannot help thinking equal to anything." *

Fox, having hurt his hand by the bursting of his gun, when out shooting, Mr. Wakefield rates him soundly for indulging in so cruel a pastime. Fox defends himself on the ground of general custom rather than of argument, and finally puts an end to the controversy in a letter of which I will quote only the earlier part.

* "Correspondence," vol. iv. p. 318.

"St. Anne's Hill, October 22nd, 1799.

"SIR,—I believe I had best not continue the controversy about field sports; or at least, if I do, I must have recourse, I believe, rather to authority and precedent than to argument; and content myself with rather excusing than justifying them. Cicero says, I believe, somewhere, 'Si quem nihil delectaret nisi quod cum laude et dignitate conjunctum foret,' . . . 'huic homini ego fortasse, et pauci, Deos propitios, plerique iratos putarent.'* But this is said, I am afraid, in defence of a libertine, whose public principles, when brought to the test, proved to be as unsound as his private life was irregular. By the way, I know no speech of Cicero's more full of beautiful passages than this is (pro M. Cælio), nor where he is more in his element. Argumentative contention is what he by no means excels in; and he is never, I think, so happy as when he has an opportunity of exhibiting a mixture of philosophy and pleasantry; and especially when he can interpose anecdotes, and references to the authority of the eminent characters in the history of his country. No man appears, indeed, to have had such real respect for authority as he; and, therefore, when he speaks on that subject, he is always natural, and in earnest; and not like those among *us*, who are so often declaiming about the wisdom of our ancestors, without knowing what they mean, or hardly ever citing any particulars of their conduct, or of their *dicta*."†

In a letter of the 22nd November, 1799, he gives his correspondent some account of his reading: "Since I wrote last to you, I have read three plays of Euripides; and in them I find no less than five instances of that description, of which Porson in his note on the 'Orestes' supposes that there are none *indubiæ fidei*. . . . I have read over, possibly

* Pro M. Cælio, xvii. 39. † "Correspondence," vol. iv. p. 349.

for the hundredth time, the portion of the 'Metamorphoses' about Pythagoras; and I think you cannot praise it too highly. I always considered it as the finest part of the whole poem; and, possibly, the Death of Hercules as the next to it."*

Further on, he says: "I have read again (what I had often read before) the chapter you refer to of Quintilian, and a most pleasing one it is; but I think he seems not to have an opinion quite high enough of our favourite Ovid; and in his laboured comparison between Demosthenes and Cicero, he appears to me to have thought them more alike, in their manner and respective excellences, than they seem to me. It is of them, I think, that he might most justly have said, '*Magis pares quàm similes.*' I have no Apollonius Rhodius, and have never read of him more than what there is in our Eton 'Poetæ Græci,' and the Edinburgh 'Collectanea'; but, from what I have read, he seems to be held far too low by Quintilian; nor can I think the '*æqualis mediocritas*' to be his character. The parts extracted in the above collections are as fine as poetry can be; and, I believe, are generally allowed to have been the model of what is certainly not the least admired part of the 'Æneid:' if he is in other parts equal to these, he ought not to be characterized by mediocrity. I wish to read the rest of his poem, partly for the sake of the poem itself, and partly to ascertain how much Virgil has taken from him; but I have not got it, and do not know what edition of it I ought to get: I should be much obliged to you if you would tell me. Shaw's is one of the latest; but I think I have heard it ill-spoken of. If, at the same time, you would advise me in regard to the Greek poets in general (of the second and third order, I

* "Correspondence," vol. iv. p. 362.

mean,) which are best worth reading, and in what editions, you would do me a great service. Of Aratus, Nicander, Dionysius, Oppian, Nonnius, Lycophron, I have never read a word, except what has occurred in notes on other authors; nor do I know what poems those are which Barnes often alludes to, calling them *Troica*. Against Lycophron, I own, I am somewhat prepossessed, from hearing from all quarters of the difficulty of understanding him. The Argonautics, that go under the name of 'Orpheus,' I have read, and think that there are some very beautiful passages in them, particularly the description of Chiron, &c. I have read, too, 'Theognis;' and observed four verses in them that are full as applicable to other countries as ever they could be to any city in Greece:

"'Λὰξ ἐπίβα δήμῳ κενεόφρονι, τύπτε δὲ κέντρῳ
Ὀξέϊ, καὶ ζεύγλην δύσλοφον ἀμφιτίθει.
Οὐ γὰρ ἔθ' εὑρήσεις δῆμον φιλοδέσποτον ὧδε
Ἀνθρώπων, ὁπόσους ἠέλιος καθορᾷ.'

"I wish to read some more, if not all, of the Greek poets, before I begin with those Latin ones that you recommended; especially as I take for granted that Valerius Flaccus (one of them) is in some degree an imitator of Apollonius Rhodius. Of him, or Silius Italicus, I never read any; and of Statius but little. Indeed, as, during far the greater part of my life, the reading of the Classics has been only an amusement and not a study, I know but little of them, beyond the works of those who are generally placed in the first rank; to which I have always more or less attended, and with which I have always been as well acquainted as most idle men, if not better. My practice has always been '*multum potius quàm multos legere.*' Of late years, it is true that I have

read with more critical attention, and made it more of a study; but my attention has been chiefly directed to the Greek language, and its writers, so that in the Latin I have a great deal still to read, and I find that it is a pleasure which grows upon me every day."*

In a letter of the 10th March, 1800, Fox writes: "I received yesterday your letter, with the proposals for the lexicon. I see innumerable advantages in an English interpretation; to which the only objection is, that it will confine the sale to this country; and how far it may be possible to get two thousand subscriptions for a work useful only to English readers of Greek, I am afraid is doubtful. If schools and colleges are excepted, the number of those who ever even look at a Greek book in this country is very small, and you know enough of schools, no doubt, to suspect that partiality for old methods is very likely to make them adhere to Latin interpretations, notwithstanding the clear advantage of using for interpretation the language we best understand. My endeavours to promote the work shall not be wanting, and you will, of course, set me down as a subscriber. My idea with regard to a Greek dictionary, which I hinted at in a former letter, was suggested by a plan of a French dictionary, mentioned by Condorcet in his life of Voltaire. It is this: that a chronological catalogue should be made of all the authors who are cited in the work; and that the sense of every word should be given first, from the oldest author who has used it; and then should follow, in regular chronological order, the senses in which it was afterwards used by more modern authors. Where the sense has not altered, it should be observed in this manner:

"Θεὸς, *a god.* Homer; and is used in the same manner by the other authors.

* "Correspondence," vol. iv. p. 363.

"Thus we should have a history of every word, which would certainly be very useful; but, perhaps, it would require a greater degree of labour than any one man could perform. Condorcet says, that Voltaire had offered to do one letter of a dictionary upon a principle something like this; but even if he would have kept his word, one letter of a French dictionary, upon this plan, would not be a hundredth part of a Greek one; for, besides the much greater copiousness of the Greek, the great distance of time between the early and the late writers must make a dictionary upon this principle more bulky when applied to that language (but, for the same reason, more desirable,) than it would be in any other.

"Soon after I wrote to you last, I read Apollonius (in Shaw's edition, for I have not been able to get Brunck's), and, upon the whole, had great satisfaction from him. His language is sometimes hard, and very often, I think, prosaical; and there is too much narration; but there are passages quite delightful to me, and, I think, his reputation has been below his merit. Both Ovid and Virgil have taken much from him; but the latter less, as appears to me, than has been commonly said. Dido is, in very few instances, a copy of Medea, whereas I had been led to suppose that she was almost wholly so; and of Hypsipyle, whose situation is most like Dido's, Apollonius has made little or nothing. I have lately read Lycophron, and am much obliged to you for recommending it to me to do so: besides, there being some very charming poetry in him, the variety of stories is very entertaining. Without Tzetzes, I should not have understood, however, a tenth part of him, nor would they, perhaps, who treat this poor scholiast with so much contempt, have understood much more. There remain, after all, some

few difficulties which, if you can clear up to me, I shall be much obliged to you, and upon which neither Canterus, Meursius, nor Potter, give me any help."* •

Again: "If you have a Lycophron with you, and much leisure, I shall be obliged to you for your opinion upon some of the above passages, for, excepting these, I do not think there are any about which I have much difficulty, though I may have forgot some, as I did not note down any whilst I was reading him. And there are, besides, many words new to me; but where the commentators have taken notice of them, and so explained them that I can acquiesce in their explanation, I do not trouble you with them. The passage you quote from Theocritus is most beautiful. I suppose Horace took his idea of

'Quem tu, Melpomene, semel'

from it; for, besides the general resemblance of the sentiment, the shape in which it is put seems exactly the same,

'Οὗς γὰρ ὀρεῦντι * * * τὼς δ' οὔκ,' κ.τ.λ.
'Quem tu * * * videris, Illum non,' &c.†

Upon some observations on Virgil he remarks: "The verses you refer to in the fifth 'Æneid' are indeed delightful, indeed I think that sort of pathetic is Virgil's great excellence in the 'Æneid,' and that, in that way, he surpasses all other poets of every age and nation, except, perhaps (and only perhaps), Shakespeare. It is on that account that I rank him so very high, for surely, to excel in that style which speaks to the heart, is the greatest of all excellence. I am glad you mention the eighth book as one of those you most admire. It has always been a peculiar favourite with me. Evander's speech, upon parting with his son, is, I think, the

* "Correspondence," vol. iv. p. 374.
† Ibid. p. 378; Theocr. ix. 35; Hor. Od. iv. 3.

most beautiful thing in the whole, especially the part from verse 574, and is, as far as I know, wholly unborrowed. What is more remarkable is, that it has not, I believe, been often attempted to be imitated. It is so, indeed, in Valerius Flaccus, lib. i., v. 323, but not, I think, very successfully.

'dum metus est, nec adhuc dolor'

goes too minutely into the philosophical reason to make, with propriety, a part of the speech. It might have done better as an observation of the poet's, in his own person, or still better, perhaps, it would have been to have left it to the reader. The passage in Virgil is, I think, beyond anything.

'Sin aliquem infandum casum'

is nature itself. And then the tenderness in turning towards Pallas:

'Dum te, care puer!' &c.

"In short, it has always appeared to me divine. On the other hand, I am sorry and surprised that, among the capital books, you should omit the fourth. All that part of Dido's speech that follows

'Num fletu ingemuit nostro?'

is surely of the highest style of excellence, as well as the description of her last impotent efforts to retain Æneas, and of the dreariness of her situation after his departure.

"I know it is the fashion to say Virgil has taken a great deal in this book from Apollonius, and it is true that he has taken some things, but not nearly so much as I had been taught to expect before I read Apollonius. I think Medea's speech in the fourth Argonaut, verse 356, is the part he has made most use of. There are some very peculiar breaks there, which Virgil has imitated certainly, and which, I think, are very beautiful and expressive, I mean, particularly

verse 380 in Virgil. To be sure, the application is different, but the manner is the same; and that Virgil had the passage before him at the time is evident, from what follows:—

'Μνησαῖο δὲ καί ποτ' ἐμοῖο,
στρευγόμενος καμάτοισι,'

compared with,

'Supplicia hausurum scopulis, et nomine Dido
Sæpe vocaturum.'

It appears to me, upon the whole, that Ovid has taken more from Apollonius than Virgil."*

Again: "Here let me finish this unconscionable letter. But I have dwelt the longer on Virgil's pathetic, because his wonderful excellence in that particular has not, in my opinion, been in general sufficiently noticed. The other beauties of the eighth 'Æneid,' such as the rites of Hercules, and the Apostrophe to him, both of which Ovid has so successfully imitated in the beginning of the fourth Metamorphosis, the story of Cacus, the Shield, and, above all, the description of Evander's Town, and of the Infancy of Rome, which appears to me, in its way, to be all but equal to the account of Alcinous, in the 'Odyssey,' have been, I believe, pretty generally celebrated, and yet I do not recollect to have seen the eighth book classed with the second, fourth, and sixth, which are the general favourites." †

An inquiry about Phaon shows, in a lively manner, Fox's curiosity upon any subject connected with famous poets.

Thus he writes in June, 1801: "Fenton, in a sort of note prefixed to his translation of Sappho to Phaon, says that we learn from the ancients that Phaon was an old

* "Correspondence," vol. iv. p. 415. † Ibid. p. 418.

mariner, restored to youth by Venus. In Burman's Ovid there is a note from Egnatius, referring to some other work of his (Egnatius's) upon the subject, and there is some reference, too, in my Variorum Ovid, to 'Ælian's Various History,' which I have not.

"This is not a very important subject of inquiry, but I own I have a sort of curiosity concerning this history of Phaon, which, if you can instruct me how to gratify, you will much oblige me."*

Again, two months later: "I have found, since I wrote to you, a great deal about Phaon, by looking into Bayle, who referred me to Lucian; a note in Heyne's Virgil, which I found at Woburn, and Palæphatus, which I have not seen, but from whom there are extracts, in some of the books I have looked into, containing, as I suppose, all he says upon the subject. I observe in Brunck's 'Analecta,' which I have lately purchased, that he takes no notice of the doubts concerning the authenticity of the Remains of Anacreon. I have always supposed them modern, but I understand there has been discovered a manuscript which proves them to be of a certain degree of antiquity, or, at least, not a forgery of H. Stephens. The style of them appears to me very modern, but yet that preserved in A. Gellius bears a strong resemblance to some of the others. As to their being really Anacreon's, I should require very strong evidence to satisfy me."†

Lord Grenville remarked to the late Sir George C. Lewis, that the good taste of Fox gave him, with inferior learning, a marked superiority over the more extensive scholarship of Wakefield. Nor is it unimportant to remark the passionate love of poetry which induced Fox, in the maturity of his talents, and at the height of his fame, to enter with eager

* "Correspondence," vol. iv. p. 437. † Ibid. p. 439.

zeal and laborious research into disputed questions of classical literature. I have omitted the references to the *digamma*, and other scholarly matters, as not interesting to the general reader. One question, however, I will notice, as it illustrates the ingenuity of Wakefield, and the more poetical taste of Fox. In quoting the well-known lines of Ovid, as appropriate to his own publications—

> "Parve, nec invideo, sine me, Liber! ibis in urbem;
> Hei mihi! quò domino non licet ire tuo.
> Vade, sed incultus; qualem decet exsulis esse:
> Infelix, habitum temporis hujus habe."

Wakefield makes the remark that the poets never used *nec*, but always *neque*, before a word beginning with a vowel. He also objects to the third line, and proposes to read—Vade; sed *in cultu*, instead of *incultus*. To this Fox replies:

"I showed your proposed alteration in the Tristia to a very good judge, who approved of it very much. I confess, myself, that I like the old reading best, and think it more in Ovid's manner; but this, perhaps, is mere fancy."

He goes on speaking of Ovid:

"I have always been a great reader of him, and thought myself the greatest admirer he had, till you called him the first poet of antiquity, which is going even beyond me. The grand and spirited style of the 'Iliad;' the true nature and simplicity of the 'Odyssey;' the poetical language (far excelling that of all other poets in the world) of the 'Georgics,' and the pathetic strokes in the 'Æneid,' give Homer and Virgil a rank, in my judgment, clearly above all competitors; but next after them I should be very apt to class Ovid, to the great scandal, I believe, of all who pique themselves upon what is called purity of taste." *

* "Correspondence," vol. iv. p. 350.

I will now proceed from a correspondence with a great scholar to some letters to a young student, Mr. Trotter, who afterwards made so objectionable a use of his intimacy with Fox. The following extract will again show Fox's partiality to Homer and Ariosto, "from their wonderful facility and the apparent absence of all study."

"I was much gratified, my dear sir, with your letter, as your taste seems so exactly to agree with mine; and am very glad, for your sake, that you have taken to Greek, as it will now be very easy to you, and, if I may judge from myself, will be one of the greatest sources of amusement to you. Homer and Ariosto have always been my favourites; there is something so delightful in their wonderful facility and the apparent absence of all study, in their expression, which is almost peculiar to them. I think you must be very partial, however, to find but two faults in the twelve books of the 'Iliad.' The passage in the Ninth Book, about Λιταί, appears to me, as it does to you, both poor and forced; but I have no great objection to that about the wall in the twelfth, though, to be sure, it is not very necessary. The Tenth Book has always been a particular favourite with me, not so much on account of Diomede's and Ulysses's exploits, (though that part is excellent, too,) as on account of the beginning, which describes so forcibly the anxious state of the generals, with an enemy so near, and having had rather the worst of the former day. I do not know any description anywhere that sets the thing so clearly before one; and then the brotherly feelings of Agamemnon towards Menelaus, and the modesty and amiableness of Menelaus's character (whom Homer, by the way, seems to be particularly fond of), are very affecting.

"Ariosto has certainly taken his night expedition either from Homer's or from Virgil's 'Nisus' and 'Euryalus.' I scarcely

know which I prefer of the three; I rather think Virgil's; but Ariosto has one merit beyond the others, from the important consequences which arise from it to the story. Tasso (for he, too, must have whatever is in the 'Iliad' or 'Æneid') is a very poor imitation, as far as I recollect.

"I suppose, as soon as you have done the 'Iliad,' you will read the 'Odyssey,' which, though certainly not so fine a poem, is, to my taste, still pleasanter to read. Pray let me know what parts of it strike you most, and believe me you cannot oblige me more than by corresponding on such subjects. Of the other Greek poets, Hesiod, Pindar, Eschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Apollonius Rhodius, and Theocritus, are the most worth reading. Of the tragedians, I like Euripides the best; but Sophocles is, I believe, more generally preferred, and is certainly more finished, and has fewer gross faults. Theocritus, in his way, is perfect; the two first Idylls, particularly, are excellent. I suppose the ode you like is Ἄδωνιν ἁ Κυθήρη which is pretty enough, but not such as to give you any adequate idea of Theocritus. There is an elegy upon Adonis, by Bion, which is in parts very beautiful, and particularly some lines of it upon the commonplace of death, which have been imitated over and over again, but have never been equalled. In Hesiod, the account of Pandora, of the Golden Age, &c., and some other parts, are very good; but there is much that is tiresome. Perhaps the work, which is most generally considered as not his, I mean the Ἀσπίς, is the one that has the most poetry in it. It is very good, and, to say that it is inferior to Homer's and Virgil's shields, is not saying much against it. Pindar is too often obscure, and sometimes much more spun out and wordy than suits my taste; but there are passages in him quite divine. I have not read above half his works. Apollonius Rhodius is, I

think, very well worth reading. The beginning of Medea's love is, I believe, original, and, though often copied since, never equalled. There are many other fine parts in his poem, besides some which Virgil has improved, others scarce equalled. There is, however, in the greater part of the poem an appearance of labour, and a hardness, that makes it tiresome. He seems to me to be an author of about the same degree of genius with Tasso; and if there is more in the latter to be liked, there is nothing, I think, to be liked in him so well as the parts of Apollonius to which I have alluded. I have said nothing of Aristophanes, because I never read him. Callimachus and Moschus are worth reading, but there is little of them. By the way, I now recollect that the passage about death, which I said was in Bion's elegy upon Adonis, is in Moschus's upon Bion. Now you have all my knowledge about Greek poetry. I am quite pleased at your liking Ariosto so much, though indeed I foresaw you would, from the great delight you expressed at Spenser, who is certainly inferior to him, though very excellent too. Tasso I think below both of them, but many count him the first among those three; and even Metastasio, who ought to be a better judge of Italian poetry than you or I, gives him, upon the whole, the preference to Ariosto." *

Further on he says: "I think, in the last half of the 'Iliad,' you will admire the 16th, 20th, 22nd, and 24th books particularly. I believe the general opinion is that Homer did write near the shore; and he certainly does, as you observe, particularly delight in illustrations taken from the sea, waves, &c. Perhaps a lion is rather too frequent a simile with him. I daresay you were delighted

* "Correspondence," vol. iv. p. 444; Trotter's "Memoirs of Fox," p. 493.

with Helen and Priam on the walls in the third book; and I suspect you will be proportionably disgusted with Tasso's servile and ill-placed imitation of it. Do not imagine, however, that I am not sensible to many beauties in Tasso, especially the parts imitated by Spenser, Erminia's flight and adventure, the description of the pestilence, and many others."*

Again: "I do not wonder at your passionate admiration of the 'Iliad,' and agree with you as to the peculiar beauty of most of the parts you mention. The interview of Priam and Achilles is, I think, the finest of all.

"I rather think that, in Andromache's first lamentation, she dwells too much upon her child and too little upon Hector; but maybe I am wrong. By your referring to the Fourth Book only for Agamemnon's brotherly kindness, I should almost suspect that you had not sufficiently noticed the extreme delicacy and kindness with which he speaks of him in the tenth, ver. 120, &c."†

Of the Greek tragic poets he says: "I am very glad you prefer Euripides to Sophocles, because it is my taste; though I am not sure that it is not thought a heresy. He (Eur.) appears to me to have much more of facility and nature in his way of writing than the other. The speech you mention of Electra is indeed beautiful; but when you have read some more of Euripides, perhaps you will not think it unrivalled. Of all Sophocles's plays, I like 'Electra' clearly the best, and I think your epithet to 'Œd. Tyr.' a very just one. It is really to me a disagreeable play; and yet there are many who not only

* "Correspondence," vol. iv. p. 447. † Ibid. p. 450.

prefer it to 'Electra,' but reckon it the finest specimen of the Greek theatre. I like his other two plays upon the Theban story both better—*i.e.*, the 'Œd. Col.' and the 'Antigone.' In the latter, there is a passage in her answer to Creon that is, perhaps, the sublimest in the world; and in many parts of the play there is a spirit almost miraculous, if, as it is said, Sophocles was past eighty when he composed it. Cicero has made great use of the passage I allude to in his oration for Milo. I suppose you selected Hipp. and Iph. in Aulis, on account of Racine; and I hope you have observed with what extreme judgment he has imitated them. In the character of Hipp. only, I think he has fallen short of his original. The scene of Phædra's discovery of her love to her nurse he has imitated pretty closely; and if he has not surpassed it, it is only because that was impossible. His 'Clytemnestra,' too, is excellent, but would have been better if he had ventured to bring on the young Orestes, as Eur. does. The change which you mention in the Greek 'Iphigenia' I like extremely; but it is censured by Aristotle as a change of character—not, I think, justly. Perhaps the sudden change in 'Menelaus,' which he also censures, is less defensible. Now, though the two plays of Eur. which you have read are undoubtedly *among* his best, I will venture to assure you that there are four others you will like full as well: 'Medea,' 'Phœnissæ,' 'Heraclidæ,' and 'Alcestis,' with the last of which, if I know anything of your taste, you will be enchanted. Many faults are found with it, but those faults lead to the greatest beauties. For instance, if Hercules's levity is a little improper in a tragedy, his shame afterwards, and the immediate consequence of that shame being a more than human exertion, afford the finest

picture of an heroic mind that exists. The speech beginning *α πολλα τλασα καρδια*, &c., is divine. Besides the two you have read, and the four I have recommended, 'Hercules Furens,' 'Iph. in Tauris,' 'Hecuba,' 'Bacchæ,' and 'Troades,' are all very excellent. Then come 'Ion,' 'Supplices,' 'Electra,' and 'Helena;' 'Orestes' and 'Andromache' are, in my judgment, the worst. I have not mentioned 'Rhesus' and 'Cyclops,' because the former is not thought to be really Euripides's, and the latter is entirely comic, or, rather, a very coarse farce; excellent, however, in its way, and the conception of the characters not unlike that of Shakespeare in Caliban. I should never finish if I were to let myself go upon Euripides. In two very material points, however, he is certainly far excelled by Sophocles—1st, in the introduction of proper subjects in the songs of the Chorus; 2ndly, in the management of his plot. The extreme absurdity of the Chorus in 'Medea' suffering her to kill her children, and of that in 'Phædra' letting her hang herself, without the least attempt to prevent it, has been often and justly ridiculed; but what signify faults where there are such excessive beauties? Pray write soon, and let me know, if you have read more of these plays, what you think of them."*

Repairing an omission, he says in a subsequent letter: "I said nothing of Eschylus, because I know but little of him. I read two of his plays—the 'Septem apud Thebas,' and the 'Prometheus'—at Oxford, of which I do not remember much, except that I liked the last far the best. I have since read the 'Eumenides,' in which there are, no doubt, most sublime passages; but in general the figures are too forced and hard for my taste; and then there is too much of the.

* "Correspondence," vol. iv. p. 457.

grand, and terrific, and gigantic, without a mixture of anything either tender, or pleasant, or elegant, which keeps the mind too much on the stretch. This never suits my taste; and I feel the same objection to most parts of the 'Paradise Lost,' though in that poem there are most splendid exceptions, —Eve, Paradise, &c. I have heard that the 'Agamemnon,' if you can conquer its obscurity, is the finest of all Eschylus's plays, and I will attempt it when I have a little time. I quite long to hear how you are captivated with 'Alcestis,' for captivated I am sure you will be.

"Mrs. Fox desires to be remembered kindly. We have been a great deal from home these last two months—twice at Lord Robert's, and at Woburn, and Mr. Whitbread's. We are now here, as I hope, to stay with little interruption; and very happy we are to be here quietly again, though our parties were very pleasant; and I think change of air at this time of the year is always good for the colds to which Mrs. Fox is subject.

"I was just going to end without noticing Pindar. I dare say the obscurities are chiefly owing to our want of means of making out the allusions. His style is more full of allusions than that of any other poet, except, perhaps, Dante, who is on that account so difficult, and, as I think, on that account only.

"The fine passages in Pindar are equal to, if not beyond, anything; but the want of interest in the subjects, and, if it is not blasphemy to say so, the excessive profusion of words, make him something bordering upon *tediousness*. There is a fire in the celebrated passage in the Second Olympic which begins σοφος ὁ πολλα ειδως φυᾳ, that is quite unequalled in any poem whatever; and the sweetness in the preceding part,

describing the happy islands, is in its way almost as good."*

The next and last letter to Mr. Trotter I will give entire:

"St. Anne's Hill. Wednesday.

"My dear Sir,—It gives Mrs. F. and me great pleasure to hear that you think you are getting better, and that, too, in spite of the weather, which, if it has been with you as with us, has been by no means favourable to such a complaint as yours. The sooner you can come the better; and I cannot help hoping this air will do you good. Parts of the first, and still more of the Second Book of the 'Æneid,' are capital indeed; the description of the night sack of a town being a subject not touched by Homer, hinders it from having that appearance of too close imitation which Virgil's other battles have; and the details—Priam's death, Helen's appearance, Hector's in the dream, and many others—are enchanting. The proem, too, to Æneas's narration is perfection itself. The part about Sinon and Laocoon does not so much please me, though I have nothing to say against it. Perhaps it is too long, but, whatever be the cause, I feel it to be rather cold. As to your friend's heresy, I cannot much wonder at or blame it, since I used to be of the same opinion myself; but I am now a convert, and my chief reason is that, though the detached parts of the 'Æneid' appear to me to be equal to anything, the story and characters appear more faulty every time I read it. My chief objection (I mean that to the character of Æneas) is, of course, not so much felt in the three first books; but afterwards he is always either insipid or odious, sometimes excites interest *against* him, and never for him.

"The events of the war, too, are not striking; and Pallas

* "Correspondence," vol. iv. p. 460.

and Lausus, who most interest you, are in effect exactly alike. But, in parts, I admire Virgil more and more every day—such as those I have alluded to in the Second Book, the finding of Andromache in the third, everything relating to Dido, the Sixth Book, the visit to Evander in the eighth, Nisus and Euryalus, Mezentius's death, and many others. In point of passion, I think Dido equal, if not superior, to anything in Homer, or Shakespeare, or Euripides. For me, that is saying everything.

"One thing which delights me in the 'Iliad' and 'Odyssey,' and of which there is nothing in Virgil, is the picture of manners, which seem to be so truly delineated. The times in which Homer lived undoubtedly gave him a great advantage in this respect, since, from his nearness to the times of which he writes, what we always see to be invention in Virgil appears like the plain truth in Homer. Upon this principle, a friend of mine observed that the characters in Shakespeare's historical plays always appear more real than those in his others. But, exclusive of this advantage, Homer certainly attends to *character* more than his imitator. I hope your friend, with all his partiality, will not maintain that the simile in the first 'Æneid' comparing Dido to Diana is equal to that in the 'Odyssey' comparing Nausicaa to her, either in propriety of application or in beauty of description. If there is an 'Apollonius Rhodius' where you are, pray look at Medea's speech, lib. 4, ver. 365, and you will perceive that even in Dido's finest speech, *nec tibi diva parens*, &c., he has imitated a good deal, and especially those expressive and sudden turns, *neque te teneo*, &c.; but, then, he has made wonderful improvements, and, on the whole, it is, perhaps, the finest thing in all poetry.

"Now, if you are not tired of all this criticism, it is not my

fault. The bad weather has preserved a verdure here which makes it more beautiful than ever; and Mrs. F. is in nice good health, and so everything goes well with me, which I am sure you will like to hear. But I have not yet had a moment for history. I sent you, some weeks ago, though I forgot to mention it in my letter, some books you had left in England, by a gentleman whose name, I think, is Croker. It was Rolleston who undertook to give them him, directed to you in Capel Street. I added to them a duplicate I had of Miller on the English Constitution—a book dedicated to me, and which is written on the best and soundest principles; but I fear it is more instructive than amusing, as, though a very sensible man, he was not a lively one.

"Yours very affectionately,

"C. J. Fox.

"P.S.—Even in the First Book, Æneas says: '*Sum pius Æneas, famâ super æthera notus.*' Can you bear this?"*

The following letter to Lord Holland shall conclude this chapter:

"October, 1797.

"If you will not read the 'Iliad' regularly through, pray read the Tenth Book, or, at least, the first half of it. It is a part I never heard particularly celebrated, but I think the beginning of it more true in the description of the uneasiness in the Greek army, and the solicitude of the different chiefs, than anything almost in the poem. It is one of those things that one cannot give an idea of by any particular quotation, but which is excellent beyond measure in placing the scene exactly before one's eyes; and the characters, too, are remarkably well distinguished and preserved. I think Homer

* "Correspondence," vol. iv. p. 464.

always happy in his accounts of Menelaus—remarkably so, you know, in the 'Odyssey;' but I think he is so always, and in this place, too, particularly. You see, I have never done with Homer; and, indeed, if there was nothing else except Virgil and Ariosto, one should never want reading." *

* "Correspondence," vol. iii. p. 137.

CHAPTER LV.

FOX'S SPEECH AT THE WHIG CLUB.—HIS NAME STRUCK OUT OF THE PRIVY COUNCIL.

In the beginning of May, 1798, the Duke of Norfolk presided at a great dinner of the Whig Club, at the Crown and Anchor. In giving the health of Fox, he observed that he was informed that two thousand persons were present; that the same number had first rallied round another great man—General Washington. "That man," his Grace added, "established the liberties of his countrymen. I leave it to you, gentlemen, to make the application." Loud applause followed the toast. He then made some moderate speeches, apparently with a view to efface the impression he had caused; but at the close of the evening he gave as a toast, "Our Sovereign—the People;" or, as Lord Holland relates it, "The People—our Sovereign." Upon the report of these speeches and toasts, he was dismissed by the Crown from the Lord Lieutenancy of the West Riding of Yorkshire.

Lord Holland says: "It was not less in the spirit of Mr. Fox's policy than of his temper to take, and even to seek, his share of the odium which the rash zeal of a friend might incur in the common cause."

In Fox's opinion, the doctrine that the People were the Sovereign was the only foundation upon which the Revolution of 1688 and the Brunswick succession could be

justified. For, if James the Second and his family had, as the University of Oxford had affirmed in 1683, an indefeasible right to the Throne, which, as the sister University of Cambridge decreed at the same time, no fault and no law could alter or diminish, it followed clearly that neither William the Third nor the first two Princes of the House of Hanover, nor the Sovereign then reigning, had any right to the Crown, but were mere usurpers. Fox was glad to defend what he considered the true doctrine, and he accordingly went to the Whig Club, and, in a speech singularly terse and logical, pointed out that the right of George III. to exact obedience from his subjects depended on that very theory of the sovereignty of the people which the Minister of the Crown had recently condemned. He then gave the same toast which had caused so much offence in the mouth of the Duke of Norfolk.*

Pitt's friends, eager to maintain

"The right divine of kings to govern wrong,"

and even not averse to

"Th' enormous faith of many made for one,"

suggested that Fox might be prosecuted, or, if that was thought unwise, might be reprimanded by the Speaker, and if he repeated his Whig heresy at the next meeting of the club, he might be sent to the Tower for the remainder of the Session. But Pitt, with better sense and judgment, and by no means anxious to make his adversary a popular martyr, decided against both the prosecution and the reprimand, and contented himself with striking Fox's name out of the Privy Council—a measure which could hardly rouse public excitement or be an occasion for adding to his rival's popularity.

* "Memoirs of the Whig Party," vol. i. p. 133.

Fox was, no doubt, right in his general doctrine—that the Revolution of 1688 could only be justified on the ground that the sovereignty of the people was supreme against the hereditary tenure of a tyrant. Lord Stanhope remarks, in speaking of the Duke of Norfolk, ("Life of Pitt," vol. iii. p. 91,) "Sentiments which at one time may be passed over as Utopian, must at another be resented as seditious." These terms are not happily chosen; the sentiments of Fox, and even of the Duke of Norfolk, were not Utopian, but were the sentiments of Whiggism at all times, and Fox's language, at least, was by no means seditious. Yet, the soundest constitutional doctrines may be mischievous, if perverted to bad ends; and on the occasion in question, it would be difficult to say that exclusion from the Privy Council was too severe a punishment for uttering truths which might have been a cloak to treason in others.

CHAPTER LVI.

FOX'S MODE OF LIFE DURING THE SECESSION.—CONTINUED.

I NOW resume the correspondence carried on by Fox during the Secession.

In 1799, he thus conveys to Lord Holland his notions on poetic language: "My general notion is, that poetical language should deal as much as possible in words conveying simple ideas, and as little as possible in such as convey complex or abstract ideas. It should deal in words that could be explained, for instance, to a person who had no previous knowledge of the nature of language, either by a reference to his senses or by signs of one sort or other."

"February 19th, 1799.

"I left off yesterday in a very tiresome, and, perhaps, not quite intelligible dissertation upon poetic language; but, by attempting to explain myself further, I should become more tiresome, without, perhaps, being more clear. Only one observation further, and I have done, and that is, that my theory about words simple rather than complex, and appealing to the senses rather than to the understanding, if it is true, helps to explain why there are better poets generally in the *earlier* than in the more *refined* periods of each language, and why many good poets are fond of adopting the style of the age preceding that in which they write."*

* "Correspondence," vol. iii. p. 155.

Referring to Cowper's noble lines on war, Fox writes to Wakefield: "Did you, who are such a hater of war, ever read the lines at the beginning of the Second Book of Cowper's 'Task?' There are few things in our language superior to them, in my judgment. He is a fine poet, and has, in a great degree, conquered my prejudices against blank verse." *

Upon this Wakefield remarks: "But surely Milton might have reconciled you to blank verse, without the aid of Cowper!" †

Fox replies: "Milton, you say, might have reconciled me to blank verse. I certainly, in common to all the world, admire the grand and stupendous passages of the 'Paradise Lost'; but yet, with all his study of harmony, he had not reconciled me to blank verse. There is a want of flow, of ease, of what the painters call a 'free pencil,' even in *his* blank verse, which is a defect in poetry that offends me more, perhaps, than it ought; and I confess, perhaps to my shame, that I read the 'Fairy Queen' with more delight than the 'Paradise Lost.' This may be owing, in some degree, perhaps, to my great partiality to the Italian poets." ‡

I shall now continue, without comment or apology, my extract of letters from Fox, omitting the politics of the day.

On the 4th of January, 1800, Fox writes to Lord Holland: "I am very glad you are reading Euripides, but I had rather you had begun almost any other play than the 'Hippolytus,' and I meant, if I had not forgot it, particularly to have recommended the 'Heraclidæ' to you. There are as fine things in 'Hippolytus' as in any of his plays; but, then,

* "Correspondence," vol. iii. p. 360.

† Ibid. vol. iv. p. 352.

‡ Ibid. p. 366.

they are almost all of them most judiciously taken by Racine, and some of them even improved—so that they would not be new to you; and there is a great deal of very indifferent in it, and the plot I think vile. I mean making Phædra kill herself, and leave the lie behind her. It is an excess of wickedness which, in my conception, does not suit her character. In short, of all Euripides's plays, I think it the one most below its reputation. The 'Cyclops,' in a style of its own, is very well worth reading. It is so Shakespearic. The worst of all, I think, is 'Andromache.' 'Helen' you would like, if it is only for the difference of the story from the common one. As to difficulty, do not mind that, and read on till you find him easy, which is much more certain than what you bid me do—write on till I find it easy."*

SAME TO SAME.

"January, 1800.

"I do not disapprove of Racine's introduction of Aricie; on the contrary, I think it is an excellent way, and, indeed, the only way of making the story tolerable, as it makes Phædra consent to the accusation through jealousy. Besides, Hippolytus's declaration of love to Aricie is beautiful in itself, and Phædra's speech when she hears of it still more so; and great beauties are with me a complete justification of the introduction of an episode. Only read Phædra's speech when first she hears of his love for Aricie. Nothing can exceed it. I have read but little of Apollonius since I wrote last; my opinion continues the same. He is a good poet, certainly, but, like Tasso, some way he does not get hold of me right. However, there are passages both

* "Correspondence," vol. iii. p. 172.

in Tasso and him that are great exceptions to this. Pray read in the First Book (of Apollonius) Telamon's and Jason's quarrel and reconciliation, particularly from v. 1329 to 1340. It is capital, and not, I think, taken from any former poet. I have not yet perceived that Virgil has taken much from him, but am not yet half way in the Second Book. If Jason's adventure at Lemnos is the prototype of Æneas at Carthage, and Dido is taken from Hypsipyle, it is indeed a silk purse out of a sow's ear. I am afraid you will not have liked the 'Heraclidæ' as I do, for I have never heard it much praised, and, perhaps, the thinking so highly is a fancy quite of my own. It is quite brimful of that sort of spirit the want of which I complain of in our Apollonius and Tasso. Are you not delighted where he says to Macaria:

"'Ὦ τέκνον, οὐκ ἔστ' ἄλλοθεν τὸ σὸν κάρα
Ἀλλ' ἐξ ἐκείνου,' &c.?'"*

SAME TO SAME.

"January, 1800.

"I am very glad you like the 'Heraclidæ' so well. Your objections to it are very well founded. It is indeed very irregular, and so are most of Euripides's plays. Sophocles's are less so; but I agree with you that the Unities, and still less Aristotle's Beginning, Middle, and End, are much less observed in the Greek plays than, from the observations of modern critics (especially the French), one should imagine. I did not mention 'Helen' as good, but thought you might like it on account of its making the story so different from the common one. I never read it but once, and believe it is one of his worst. I will answer for your liking 'Alcestis;' and

* "Correspondence," vol. iii. p. 174. Eurip. "Heraclidæ," 539.

there is one scene in the 'Troades' which, I am sure, will entertain you at least very much, though perhaps it is not very dramatical, nor in the circumstance very natural. I mean the dispute, or, rather, debate, between Hecuba and Helen. Did not Alcmena and Eurystheus put you a little in mind of Queen Margaret and York in Henry VI.? I am very glad you grow to find Greek so easy; and I think if you get deep into Euripides, you will grow to like, as I do, his very faults. I dare say the passages which you and Mr. Marsh cannot make out will be equally unintelligible to me; but yet I should like to try, and, therefore, pray point them out to me. I know there is a Barnes's Euripides at Woolbeding; so you need only mention the page or verse. I suppose Evander's relating his having had Hercules for his guest, and sending his son with Æneas, is taken from Lycus, in Apollonius; but it is so superior that Apollonius looks quite like the imitation. I admire Virgil more than ever, for his power of giving originality to his most exact imitations."*

SAME TO SAME.

"March 14th, 1800.

"I have been reading Lycophron, and have been very much pleased, partly with him and partly with the innumerable stories which his Scholiast Tzetzes gives for the purpose of explaining him."†

SAME TO SAME.

"March 20th, 1800.

"I have just been reading the 'Phœnissæ,' on account of Porson's new edition, and find that it deserves a higher rank among Euripides's plays than I had given it in my mind. The

* "Correspondence," vol. iii. p. 174. † Ibid. p. 177.

scene with Jocasta and the two brothers is famous. Of all poets, Euripides appears to me, without exception, the most useful for a public speaker."*

SAME TO SAME.

"August 19th, 1800.

"I do not wonder you like the 'Odyssey' better than ever; it is the most charming reading of all. I have read near half of it over again lately. I do not know whether I do not like the book with Nausicaa the best of all; but it is all delightful, and there is such variety, which I am afraid the 'Iliad' cannot boast of. I am now reading the 'Conquista di Granata' of Graziani. It seems full of story, and the poetry sometimes good, oftener middling. I have read the first volume of Laing's 'History of Scotland.' He is a bad writer, but it is a good book, with a great deal of good sense in parts of it."†

SAME TO SAME.

"September 28th, 1800.

"I am very glad you have been reading the 'Odyssey' regularly, and am sure it has well paid you for the trouble. The books you mention (Φ and X) are certainly the finest, but whether the most pleasing, and particularly whether the best specimens of the characteristic beauty of the 'Odyssey' as distinguished from that of the 'Iliad,' I rather doubt. I have read the Υ, and the three following books, since I received your letter yesterday morning, and do not wonder at your admiring them as you do. I had a perfect recollection of the *second-sight* passage, which is a very singular one. I believe it would be very difficult to match it in any poet, whether real or pretended, of the second-sighted country. As to pro-

* "Correspondence," vol. iii. p. 177. † Ibid. p. 178.

sody, I once set down all the peculiarities of it in the 'Odyssey' upon paper; but I think there was only one line (and I do not know what that is) that I could not reconcile to the common rules. In the four books I read yesterday, I observed nothing much out of the way; ἔμπαιος is used as a dactyle, but diphthongs in such positions are often made short, as τοιος εων, οιος ουτις Αχαιων—ἔπεὶῃ πολυ φερτερον εστι, and many other instances; στεᾶτος as a dissyllable may seem strange; but why should not the εα *there* be contracted like the εα in τεύχεα, τείχεα, &c., which in Homer are always written at length, but in more modern authors τεύχη, τείχη, &c.? The same observation applies to ἐκφόρεον for ἐξεφορουν. Tell me your difficulties, and I think I can, in most cases, resolve them. I do not wonder Marsh does not know so much about it, for he was not, I believe, at Eton, and, though it sounds impertinent to say so, I think that none but those who have been there ever have a correct notion of Greek or even Latin metre. What you say about v. 120 in the A is not quite correct; what Tiresias there says about the one Ulysses is to carry, &c., is not mentioned as a circumstance necessary to his return (as you erroneously state it), but as a circumstance which is to take place after his return, and after his conquest of the suitors in a voyage which he (Tiresias) enjoins him to make; and accordingly Ulysses afterwards mentions it to Penelope as *what is to happen*—but you had not got to the passage when you wrote. The 'Odyssey' ends with the massacre of the suitors and the mutual recognition between Ulysses and Penelope, and consequently could not relate the subsequent events of Ulysses's life. Perhaps Homer meant to make another poem of them, and I heartily wish he had. You are to observe that among the many suspected parts of the 'Odyssey,' all that part of Ψ

which is subsequent to v. 299, and the whole of Ω, are the most generally supposed to be spurious. In regard to the A, too, I cannot help agreeing with those who think the account of Tantalus, Sisyphus, &c., fine as they are, interpolations, and that this interpolation is the only ground for representing Ulysses as having seen the infernal *regions*. He brought up the ψυχαὶ νεκύων to him: he did not go down to them; and there is an indistinctness upon the common supposition wholly unlike Homer. On the other hand, if you go from v. 566 to v. 600, all is pretty clear; but I think it still clearer by going at once from v. 563 to v. 627; then it runs naturally:

"'βῆ δὲ μετ' ἄλλας
ψυχὰς εἰς ἔρεβος νεκύων κατατεθνηώτων,
αὐτὰρ ἐγὼν αὐτοῦ μένον ἔμπεδον.'

And by this means, you get rid of Hercules's deification, &c., which Homer seems to have known nothing of, or, indeed, of any *man* becoming a god. It is true by this erasure we lose some beautiful verses, but I cannot help thinking it right. The passage, v. 69, &c., in the M is apparently spurious, as it is the single one in which the Argo and Jason are mentioned; but, indeed, the whole account of the πλαγκταὶ, beginning at v. 59, seems very doubtful, as Ulysses never mentions them afterwards. Perhaps it would be right to go from v. 38 to 73, though even then there is some obscurity, as it is not quite easy to consider the keeping nearer to the one or the other of the rocks, as the two ὁδοὶ that Circe mentions, though, I rather think, that is the meaning. There are, certainly, more passages in the 'Odyssey' than in the 'Iliad' which are justly suspected; but that is no reason for doubting their having been written by the same poet, of which I cannot help thinking the internal evidence most convincing.

You are to understand that when I speak of spurious passages, I do not mean that such passages are modern interpolations; so far from it, that I think there is reason to believe the interpolations (if such they were) as ancient as any other Greek poetry we have, and many of them are very beautiful. Even in the Ω, v. 36, &c., ὄλβιε Πηλέος υἱὲ is beautiful; but how much has Virgil improved it by his application? O! felix una ante alias Priameia virgo? &c. Well, here is Homer criticism enough; but it is a subject upon which I never tire.

"You have hardly seen the new edition of Burns. Currie's life of him is the most affected thing I ever read, and in some parts (particularly when he speaks of his drunkenness, an odd subject to be pompous upon) pompous to a degree of ridicule. Some of Burns's things are admirable, particularly 'Tam o' Shanter,' which is very Bermeddinish. The 'Cotter's Saturday Night' is very good, too. It seems strange, but I think that it is so, that the Scotch should excel in pastoral. Except the 'Tancia' and 'Cecco da Varlungo,' I think some of the Scotch songs, and some of Burns's works, the best pastorals in any modern language."*

TO THE HON. R. FITZPATRICK.

"1799.

"As to criticism and poetry (that is, reading poetry), there is no danger of my leaving them off; and my late Greek studies have made me fonder of them than ever; but as to versifying myself, I doubt the fit will soon be over, though, as yet, I have not been able even to keep my resolution about the Faddles, and shall send Price, by to-day's post, one more Latin and one more Italian. I know it is not fair to argue against criticisms from the poetry of the

* "Correspondence," vol. iii. p. 178.

critic; if it were, I think Addison's 'Cato,' with all its merit, would sufficiently prove that he did not much understand the nature of dramatic poetry; and, indeed, in this instance, I think the argument pretty fair. But it is certainly not in the language, or poetry, or what may be called the execution, that 'Cato' fails, but in the plan and scheme of it. As to the Union, I know nothing but what I see in the papers; but Sir J. Parnell's dismission looks as if Pitt was in earnest. But, as you say, no more of politics, and let poetry and criticism be the order of the day; and of these, if I could get Young One to meet you here for a day or two, we might have a very pleasant dose. There is a Cambridge declamation published of William Lamb, and which, though too Johnsonic in the style, is certainly an extraordinary performance for so young a man, and has, I think, many strokes of genius in it."*

TO LORD HOLLAND.

"St. Anne's Hill, Thursday, July 23rd, 1801.

"I will answer your questions as well as I can. The Λόγος Αἰγύπτιος is, I suppose, the work of Aristides the sophist, who lived in the time of M. Aurelius, and travelled a great deal in Egypt. His works were printed at Oxford, 1723.† I do not know where you can find an account of all the Arabian authors, but it is not unlikely that sufficient information upon that subject may be in d'Herbelot's 'Oriental Dictionary.' I have no doubt but there are both English and French translations of 'Abulfeda,' who is constantly quoted by Gibbon and others; but I know there is a Latin translation of him, which was published, together with the

* "Correspondence," vol. iii. p. 287-8. William Lamb was the late Lord Melbourne.

† "Ed. Jebb," Oxford, 1722, two vols. 4to.

original, in London, 1650. Nota, at a time when, according to modern courtly writers, no good literature was cultivated in England.*

"The generally received opinion is, that Moses left Egypt about 1500 years before Christ.

"The date, (and of late, as you know, the existence) of the Trojan war is more disputed. I believe the commonest opinion is, that it was about 1100 years before Christ,† and, consequently, 400 years after Moses; but some maintain it to have been in the time of Rehoboam, Solomon's son, which would make it near 200 years later. As to Homer, Herodotus says positively that he lived 400 years after the Trojan war;‡ but the more common opinion has been that he lived and wrote within a century after it—nay, some suppose that he sung his verses to the sons and grandsons of his heroes. One of the most modern guesses (for it appears to me to be nothing more) is, that Homer, or at least, his family, were among the numerous emigrants from Greece to Asia, on the return of the Heraclidæ to Peloponnesus, which is supposed to have happened about fifty years after the destruction of Troy,§ and that the poem was written in Asia Minor in compliment to

* A list of the translations of the "History of Abulfeda" is given in the "Biographie Universelle." A Latin translation of that portion of his Geography which relates to the countries beyond the Oxus, was published by Greaves, at London, 1650, 4to. This is the work referred to by Fox; it consists only of sixty-four pages. Fox's remark does not apply in this case, for Greaves was an adherent of the Royalist cause, and had been patronized by Laud; and the publication of his translation of the entire Geography of Abulfeda was prevented by the war.

† The date of Eratosthenes for the taking of Troy is 1184 B.C.

‡ Herodotus nowhere says expressly that Homer lived 400 years after the Trojan war; but he states (ii. 53.) that Homer lived about 400 years before his own time; and (ii. 145) that the Trojan war was about 800 years before his own time. If these two statements are put together, it follows that Homer lived about 400 years after the Trojan war.

§ Thucydides (i. 12) places the return of the Heraclidæ to the Peloponnesus in the eightieth year after the capture of Troy.

the chiefs of those emigrants, and intended to show that they were the true authors of the Grecian glory, on the one hand, and that their superior valour might make them easily masters of the country to which they had emigrated, on the other.* This appears to me a specious hypothesis, and that it was that made me remark, not, as you once understood me, that he never mentions Hercules, but that he never exalts him; that, in one instance, in the 'Odyssey,' he ascribes to him a horrid and treacherous outrage, † and never speaks of him with much respect. It is observable that several passages where he is mentioned are very suspicious from internal evidence relating to digammas, &c. Herodotus says that he was 400 years younger than Homer,‡ and consequently, according to *his* calculation, that 800 years had elapsed between the Trojan war and his writing; but we know that he wrote 450 years before Christ, and, therefore, according to him, the Trojan war would be 1250 years before Christ, and so only 250 years subsequent to Moses. If the era of Moses is, as I have stated it, and I believe it is very generally understood so, between Moses and Herodotus there are only 1050 years; and consequently, if the Pyramids were built 1200 years before Herodotus, as your author says, they must have been built near 200 years anterior, instead of 200 years subsequent to Moses; but I suspect he follows some different system of chronology from that generally received, and plenty of systems there are built upon very slender foundations. That Homer should not have noticed the Pyramids, if they existed in his time, is very wonderful, as he speaks so much about Egypt; that there should be no mention of them in

* This, and other theories relating to Homer, are stated and discussed by Colonel Mure, in his work entitled "History of the Language and Literature of Ancient Greece," vol. ii. c. 18.

† See "Odyssey," xxi. 24–30.

‡ Ante, p. 181.

Hesiod is not extraordinary, for his only work extant being a 'Georgic,'* they would not come in his way. Among Joseph's adventures they would very naturally have found a place. After all, I cannot conceive what difficulty you can have about these Pyramids in 'Bermeddin;' Abdelrahman may get out any way; and if you wish to say anything about them and their history, you may choose any account of them you please, and Herodotus's seems made exactly for such a poem as 'Bermeddin.' I do not want to read White, or any author, to learn that the famous library at Alexandria was destroyed long before Mahomet was born—that is to say, when Julius Cæsar was at Alexandria—not, it is to be supposed, intentionally, by fire. But it is possible that though the library of the Ptolemies was gone, the city of Alexandria might have collected a considerable library afterwards; and this is the more likely on account of the great renown of that which had been destroyed, which they might wish to emulate. But of this second library nothing, I believe, is known, but that, such as it was, it was destroyed by Amrou; nor is even that fact by any means certain.† I do not wonder you are delighted with Lucretius. I have always thought Virgil alludes to him in the passage, '*Felix qui potuit*,'‡ &c., and that he means to say Lucretius has the first place; and then, by '*Fortunatus et ille*,' &c., gives himself the second. The passage you mention is indeed an imitation, and in some respects a pretty close one—not in all parts, either, an improvement.§ I think the four lines, '*Nec varios inhiant*,' &c., very heavy in comparison of Lucretius.

* Fox here treats the "Theogony" and the "Shield of Hercules" as the works of a poet different from Hesiod, the author of "Works and Days."

† On the Alexandrine Libraries, see "Grafenham, Geschichte der Klassischen Philologie," vol. iii. p. 53.

‡ "Georg." ii. 490.

§ Compare "Georg." ii. 461, with Lucret. ii. 24.

In the counter-part, '*At secura quies*,' &c., Virgil is more beautiful, to be sure; but yet, by being more general, he is less picturesque, or (since Price has given such a fanciful meaning to that word) I suppose I must say less descriptive, which last word does not explain my idea half so well.* Lucretius, too, as his subject required (Virgil's did not), is, as he always is, argumentative in the midst of his poetry, and puts '*non magnis opibus*,' to make out his proposition; whereas Virgil's '*parvo assueta juventus*' is of no great use, either to the sense or to the poetry. '*Inhiant*' is the only reading I ever saw; nor is there any hint of another in the three editions of Virgil which I have. One of the notes in the 'Variorum' says it belongs to 'Salutantes.' I had always understood it to belong to 'Agricolæ;' and the Roman and Delphin editions favour my construction, as Annibal Caro translates it '*bramano*,' and the Delphin interprets it 'appetunt,' which must refer to the 'Agricolæ.'† By the way, I do not approve of Caro's or the Delphin's sense, though I do of their construction. I conceive '*inhiant*' to mean simply to 'stare at,' or to 'gape at.' I should be at as much difficulty to construe '*inhians*' as you seem to find in '*inhiant*.' I hope the grand passage in the First Book of Lucretius about the winds did not escape you.‡ Virgil, if I recollect, has pillaged that, too, pretty well, though I cannot immediately point out the places." §

In writing to Mr. Grey on the subject of the song of the nightingale, he says: "In defence of my opinion about

* The sense which Mr. Uvedale Price affixes to this word, in his "Essay on the Picturesque," is, "that quality in external nature which fits it for being the subject of a picture." Mr. Price was a friend of Fox; they travelled together in Italy when Fox was a young man. See "Correspondence," vol. i. p. 29.

† Heyne also interprets it by "habere cupiunt."

‡ See Lucret. i. 272–95.

§ "Correspondence," vol. iii. p. 192.

the nightingale, I find Chaucer—who of all poets seems to have been the fondest of the singing of birds—calls it a *merry note*, and though Theocritus mentions nightingales six or seven times, he never mentions their note as plaintive or melancholy. It is true he does not call it anywhere merry, as Chaucer does, but, by mentioning it with the song of the blackbird, and as answering it, he seems to imply that it was a cheerful note. Sophocles is against us; but even he only says *lamenting Itys*, and the comparison of her to Electra is rather as to perseverance day and night, than as to sorrow. At all events, a tragic poet is not half so good an authority in this question as Theocritus and Chaucer.

"I cannot light upon the passage in the 'Odyssey' where Penelope's restlessness is compared to the nightingale; but I am sure it is only as to restlessness or watchfulness that he makes the comparison. If you will read the last twelve books of the Odyssey, you will certainly find it, and I am sure you will be paid for your hunt, whether you find it or not. The passage in Chaucer is in the 'Flower and the Leaf,' p. 99. The one I particularly allude to in Theocritus, is in his Epigrams—I think in the fourth.

"Dryden has transferred the word *merry* to the goldfinch, in his 'Flower and the Leaf,' in deference, maybe, to the vulgar error; but pray read his description of the nightingale here—it is quite delightful.

"I am afraid I like these researches as much better than those that relate to Shaftesbury, Sunderland, &c., as I do those better than attending the House of Commons."*

In respect to Italian poets, Fox, in a letter to Mr. Trotter, says: "I think when you say you *despise* Tasso, you go further

* "Correspondence," vol. iii. p. 310.

than I can do, and though there is servility in his *manner* of imitation which is disgusting, yet it is hardly fair to be angry with him for translating a simile of Homer's—a plunder, if it be one, of which nearly every poet has been guilty. If there be one who has not, I suspect it is he whom you say you are going to read. I mean Dante. I have only read part of Dante, and admire him very much. I think the brilliant passages are thicker set in his works than in those of almost any other poet; but the want of connection and interest makes him heavy; and besides the difficulty of his language, which I do not think much of, the obscurity of that part of history to which he refers is much against him. His *allusions*, in which he deals not a little, are, in consequence, most of them lost.

"I agree in liking Armida, but cannot help thinking Rinaldo's detention in her garden very inferior to Ruggiero's.

> "'Or fino agli occhi ben nuota nel golfo
> Delle delizie e delle cose belle,'

may seem to some an expression rather too familiar, and nearly foolish; but it is much better for describing the sort of situation in which the two heroes are supposed to be than the 'Romito Amante' of Tasso—not to mention the garden of Armida being all on the inside of the palace, and walled round by it, instead of the beautiful country described by Ariosto. Do you not think, too, that Spenser has much improved upon Tasso by giving the song in praise of pleasure to a nymph rather than to a parrot?

"Pray, if you want any information about Greek poets or others that I can give you, do not spare me, for it is a great delight to me to be employed upon such subjects with one who has a true relish for them."*

* "Correspondence," vol. iv. p. 448.

In a letter to Lord Holland, Fox again takes occasion to praise Ariosto.

"December 10th, 1798.

"Dryden wants a certain degree of easy playfulness that belongs to Ariosto, Parnell is too grave, Prior does not seem to me to have the knack (perhaps only because he did not try it) of mixing familiar and serious, though he does very well in each respectively. The former, however, is his forte; at least, I think 'Alma' better than either 'Solomon' or 'Henry and Emma.'"

"December 14th, 1798.

"I cannot help thinking that Dryden has not the exact sort of playfulness, or levity, or familiarity of manner, or easy grace which I mean, and which it is very difficult rightly to define. Prior has more of it than Dryden, La Fontaine more than Prior, and Ariosto and Ovid as much as possible, which in them is the more remarkable, as I do not think it often belongs to any great genius. The 'Cock and the Fox' is the poem of Dryden where he approaches nearest to the style I mean; but as the subject there is all of the *comic* kind, there is not room for a display of that style in all its merits, part of which, I think, consists in mixing occasionally a certain degree of playfulness in even the most tragic and sublime subjects, and that, too, without diminishing, but rather increasing, the interest. Besides, though in some of Dryden's fables there is a conceit and wit, I do not recollect anything of the familiar and easy kind very successful. The 'Cock and the Fox' is rather of a kind allied to the mock heroic, especially chanticleer's speeches, which is very different from what I mean, and of which (meaning the mock heroic) there is not a single trait in 'Orlando Furioso.' I do not know whether I explain myself thoroughly, but if

we were to read Ariosto together, I could show you by example what I mean; and, indeed, Spenser has some of it, but to those who are full of Ariosto, his imitation in this respect appears too close to have quite the right effect." *

I will now give two more quotations from his letters to his nephew: "By-the-by, I do not know whether you have had Cowper the poet's life and letters. They are delightful; but Buonaiuti proscribes quartos. To Godwin's 'Life of Chaucer' there is the same objection, and, I suspect, another also—that it is in some parts very dull and tiresome. I have not read it, but I looked into it when I was at Woolbeding. I observe that he takes an opportunity of showing his stupidity in not admiring Racine. It puts me quite in a passion; *je veux contre eux faire un jour un gros livre*, as Voltaire says. Even Dryden, who speaks with proper respect of Corneille and Moliere, vilipends Racine. If ever I publish my edition of his works, I will give it him for it, you may depend. Oh, how I wish that I could make up my mind to think it right to devote all the remaining part of my life to such subjects, and such only! Indeed, I rather think I shall; and yet, if there were a chance of re-establishing a strong Whig party, however composed,

> 'Non adeo has exosa manus victoria fugit
> Ut tantâ quicquam pro spe tentare recusem.'

Grey, too, is in Northumberland, and will not (come) except I press him, which I do not feel myself justified in doing at present. He is perfectly right in all his ideas. Poor Holland House is said to be in a bad way. I have not seen it, but I find there is a terrible outcry against its weakness; so that I fear it cannot stand. Why not, as well as the Doctor, you will say, against whom there is a similar outcry? Why,

* "Correspondence," vol. iii. p. 147.

if you were as obstinate as the Doctor's supporters, perhaps it might; but, I fear, it cannot be. . . . I never heard of any other Portuguese poet but Camoens, and concluded there was no other of note; but you will bring over, I hope, some of those whom you say Frere so much admires. Lope de Vega is still, I own, the great object of my curiosity, and I must not only see your translations but read two or three of his plays with you in the original. If his extravagance is of the Drydenish style, it seems odd that the earlier dramatic poets, Fletcher, &c., who probably copied from him and other Spanish poets, should have little or nothing of the sort.

"P.S.—I have employed my odd five minutes, &c., lately in looking over Horace's Odes; pray tell me which you think the most perfect and beautiful of them in their different styles. I think 'Quis desiderio' the most perfect of all, and next, 'Quem tu Melpomene;' in the lighter style, 'Ulla si juris tibi pejerati' and 'Quis multâ gracilis;' in the grander style, 'Ille et nefasto,' 'Descende cœlo' (with the exception, however, of the three last stanzas), the Regulus Ode, about half of 'Qualem ministrum,' and 'Pindarum quisquis.' I like what are called the *flat endings* in many of his odes, but dislike them extremely in others, particularly in the last stanza of 'Qualem ministrum.'"*

The next begins with Cowper, and goes on to Dryden's translations:

"What can you mean by saying there is little good of the new poetry in Cowper? What, not the triplets to Mary? Not the verses about his first love, in the early part? Not *one* of the sonnets? Not the Shipwreck or Outcast? Pray read them over again, and repeat your former judg-

* "Correspondence," vol. iii. p. 234.

ment, if you dare. I have not the book here, having lent it, or I could quote, I believe, much more. Hayley's part of the book is, no doubt, lamentable, and what I am most angry with him for is, that he seems to have withheld much that I should have liked to read. I think, in general, however (not in this publication), that you hold poor Hayley too cheap. His 'History of Old Maids,' and parts of the 'Trials of Temper,' are, I think, very good. I like Frere's translation very much, and shall be glad to see the original. I read a little, and very little, of Gifford, and thought it vile. To catch the manner of Juvenal is difficult, and, without his peculiar manner, he is not himself. Dryden catches it sometimes admirably. Only compare his conclusion of the Tenth Satire with Johnson's, and I hope you will think the superiority as great as I do. The part about Messalina, in the Sixth Book, is very good, too. If the word *sin* could fairly stand for *pleasure*, it would be perfect.

"Now we are upon criticism, do you know that if you have made out any good rule about *personification*, it is what I want more than anything of the kind. I feel clearly that it is sometimes right, and sometimes wrong; that Johnson and his imitators are excessive in it, even to ridicule; that it is often convenient and not ungraceful, and at other times detestable; but upon what principle it should be adopted here, and rejected there, I have never been able to satisfy myself. I have been very sparing of it indeed in what I have written, both because I think it safer to err on that side than on the other, and because it is less used by the ancients, to whose religion, in matters of taste, I grow every day more and more bigoted."*

In order to give more room for the insertion of Fox's

* "Correspondence," vol. iii. p. 236.

literary opinions, I have gone beyond the period which properly belongs to the Secession. I now return to it, in order to relate an interruption of Fox's quiet life, which led to one of his most memorable speeches.

On his birthday, in January, 1799, Fox, having completed his fiftieth year, addressed these verses to his wife:

> "Of years I have now half a century past,
> And none of the fifty so blest as the last.
> How it happens my troubles thus daily should cease,
> And my happiness thus with my years should increase,
> This defiance of Nature's more general laws,
> You alone can explain, who alone are the cause."

Yet although Mrs. Fox was everything that affection could desire, though she constantly studied his happiness, partook of his love for English and Italian poets, worshipped his greatness, and was as amiable in domestic life as he himself was, she was not alone the cause that his happiness increased with his years. The main cause was that he was made to be happy, and having done what he thought right in public life, events which to other men would have been severe and painful disappointments were to him nothing more than the defeats he had expected. In 1778, when he was under thirty, he had written thus to Richard Fitzpatrick:

"I think I have given you enough of politics, considering I have nothing but reports and conjectures to give you. With respect to my own share, I can only say that people flatter me that I continue to gain, rather than lose, my credit as an orator, and *I am so convinced that this is all that I ever shall gain* (*unless I choose to become the meanest of men*), *that I never think of any other object of ambition.* . . . Great reputation I think I may acquire, and *keep;* great situation I *never* can acquire, nor, if acquired, *keep*, *without*

making sacrifices that I never will make. If I am wrong, and more sanguine people right, *tant mieux,* and I shall be as happy as they can be; but if I am right, I am sure I shall be the happier for having made up my mind to my situation."*

Fox's character places him above the suspicion that he affected anything he did not feel in this intimate letter to his friend. Thus, at fifty, he found himself with great reputation, and was perfectly content without great situation.

Let us add to this, that he had outlived the vehement passions of his youth; that his debts were paid, his desires moderate, and his style of living exactly suited to his taste and his temper.

It was in this disposition of mind that he received the news of the First Consul's offer to treat of peace, and of Lord Grenville's answer. In writing to his nephew, after speaking of Euripides and Sophocles, of Queen Margaret and Henry VI., of Apollonius and of Virgil, he added: "I approve of Bonaparte's letter very much indeed; and what an answer! Surely they must think as meanly of the people of this country as I do. 'Restore monarchy, and show us that you can behave peaceably for some time, before we can treat.' And this experience of peaceable demeanour is desired during the war!" †

Urged by his friends to come to London, and make one more effort for peace, he consented to go to Holland House for two nights, most reluctantly, "and when he heard," says Lord Holland, "that the debate was postponed in consequence of Mr. Pitt's indisposition, he sat silent and overcome, as if the intelligence of some great calamity had reached his ears. I saw tears steal down his cheeks, so vexed was he at being detained from his garden, his books and his cheerful life in the country."‡

* "Correspondence," vol. i. p. 169. † Ibid. vol. iii. p. 175.

‡ "Memoirs of the Whig Party," vol. i.

CHAPTER LVII.

WAR ON THE CONTINENT.—NAPOLEON'S OVERTURE.—DEBATE.

In 1799, a new war broke out on the Continent. The Emperor Paul, having succeeded to the Empress Catherine, found himself unable to endure the insolent demands of the French Republic, and formed a league with Austria and England against France. The plan comprised a joint English and Russian expedition to the Helder. The Duke of York having been placed in command of the combined army, their movements were directed by the want of skill and military knowledge which were characteristic of that brave but incapable prince. After mentioning his various deficiencies as a general, and his culpable good-nature, which prevented him from saying no when he ought to have done so, Sir Henry Bunbury adds: "To these defects must be added habits of indulgence, and a looseness of talking after dinner about individuals, which made him enemies, and which, in this unfortunate campaign, probably excited or inflamed the rancour of the Russian generals." * Thus commanded, the troops, after some blundering attempts to advance, fell back to their former positions. The Duke of York capitulated, and returned to England, respected for his courage, but much derided for his incapacity. On the Rhine,

* "Sir H. Bunbury," p. 44. See also "Memoir of Sir R. Abercromby."

in Switzerland, and in Italy, great actions were fought, and victories were alternately won by the contending armies.

After many vicissitudes, Napoleon Bonaparte, landing from Egypt, assumed, by military force, that position of dictator which could alone restore internal peace, inspire external confidence, and inaugurate what might have been a commencement of order in France, and of tranquillity in Europe. Unhappily, Lord Grenville and his colleagues were blind to an augury which might have enabled them to repair their former errors, and to make a lasting peace with France.

On the 25th of December, 1799, Napoleon Bonaparte, now First Consul of France, made a direct overture to Great Britain. Addressing himself to the King of Great Britain and Ireland, he said:

"Called, by the wishes of the French nation, to occupy the first magistracy of the Republic, I think it proper, on entering into office, to make a direct communication of it to your Majesty.

"The war, which for eight years has ravaged the four quarters of the world, must it be eternal? Are there no means of coming to an understanding?

"How can the two most enlightened nations of Europe, powerful and strong beyond what their safety and independence require, sacrifice to ideas of vain greatness the benefits of commerce, internal prosperity, and the happiness of families? How is it that they do not feel that peace is of the first necessity, as well as of the first glory?

"These sentiments cannot be foreign to the heart of your Majesty, who reigns over a free nation, and with the sole view of making it happy.

"Your Majesty will only see in this overture my sincere

desire to contribute efficaciously, for the second time, to a general pacification by a step speedy, entirely of confidence, and disengaged from those forms which, necessary perhaps to disguise the dependence of weak States, prove only in those which are strong the mutual desire of deceiving one another.

"France and England, by the abuse of their strength, may still, for a long time, for the misfortune of all nations, retard the period of their being exhausted. But I will venture to say it, the fate of all civilized nations is attached to the termination of a war which involves the whole world."

To this overture Lord Grenville made a captious and irritating reply. It was in substance that France had shown herself incapable of maintaining permanently the relations of peace and amity; that if by internal changes, such as the restoration of the Bourbons, or by a change of conduct towards the Powers of Europe, the British Government should be convinced that peace could be obtained, and be reckoned upon as permanent, they would then negotiate, but in the meantime the war must continue.*

Fox was strongly urged to attend the debate on the rejection of this overture. He was told that there were signs of a disposition for peace, and that great doubts existed of the propriety of the step that had been taken.

Thus pressed, he wrote to Lord Holland:

"January 17th, 1800.

"I have determined, against inclination, common sense, and philosophy, to attend upon the question of Bonaparte's letter, &c., and shall be much obliged to you if you will inquire about the time and manner in which it will probably come on."†

* "Parliamentary History," vol. xxxiv. pp. 1198–1200.

† "Correspondence," vol. iii. p. 176.

The debate took place on the 3rd of February, 1800. Fox rose after Pitt, and made a most powerful speech. But some of his friends remarked that instead of discussing the rejection of the Consul's overture, upon which many of the friends of the Ministry would have agreed with him, he was led by Pitt's example into a discussion of the origin of the war, upon which the House of Commons were already committed. However imprudent this course might be, the instruction given on this occasion ought not to be thrown away by the posterity of those who made the war.

Fox's opinion on the origin of the war was expressed in the following terms:

"My opinion is that, when the unfortunate King of France offered to us, in the letter delivered by M. Chauvelin and M. Talleyrand, and even entreated us, to mediate between him and the allied Powers of Austria and Prussia, they (the Ministers) ought to have accepted the offer, and exerted their influence to save Europe from the consequence of a system which was then beginning to manifest itself. It was, at least, a question of prudence; and as we had never refused to treat and to mediate with the old princes on account of their ambition or their perfidy, we ought to have been equally ready now, when the same principles were acted upon by other men. I must doubt the sensibility which could be so cold and so indifferent at the proper moment for its activity. I fear that there were at that moment the germs of ambition rising in the mind of the right honourable gentleman, and that he was beginning, like others, to entertain hopes that something might be obtained out of the coming confusion. What but such a sentiment could have prevented him from seizing the fair occasion that was offered for preventing the calamities with which Europe was threatened? What but some such

interested principle could have made him forego the truly honourable task, by which his administration would have displayed its magnanimity and its power? But for some such feeling, would not this country, both in wisdom and in dignity, have interfered, and, in conjunction with the other Powers, have said to France: 'You ask for a mediation; we will mediate with candour and sincerity, but we will at the same time declare to you our apprehensions. We do not trust to your assertion of a determination to avoid all foreign conquest, and that you are desirous only of settling your own Constitution, because your language is contradicted by experience and the evidence of facts. You are Frenchmen, and you cannot so soon have thrown off the Bourbon principles in which you were educated. You have already imitated the bad practice of your princes; you have seized on Savoy, without a colour of right. But here we take our stand. Thus far you have gone, and we cannot help it; but you must go no further. We will tell you distinctly what we shall consider as an attack on the balance and the security of Europe; and as the condition of our interference, we will tell you also the securities that we think essential to the general repose.' This ought to have been the language of his Majesty's Ministers when their mediation was solicited; and something of this kind they evidently thought of when they sent the instructions to Petersburgh which they have mentioned this night, but upon which they never acted. Having not done so, I say they have no claim to talk now about the violated rights of Europe, about the aggression of the French, and about the origin of the war in which this country was so suddenly afterwards plunged. Instead of this, what did they do? They hung back; they avoided explanation; they gave the French no means of satisfying them; and I repeat my proposition—

when there is a question of peace and war between two nations, that government puts itself in the wrong which refuses to state with clearness and precision what she would consider as a satisfaction and a pledge of peace."*

The most striking passage, however, is Fox's answer to Pitt, who, in speaking against the whole course of Bonaparte's military and diplomatic career, had thus concluded:

"What, then, is the inference I am to draw from all that I have now stated? Is it, that in no case will we treat with Bonaparte? I say no such thing. But I say, as has been said in the answer returned to the French note, that we ought to wait for experience and the evidence of facts before we are convinced that such a treaty is admissible."†

Fox thus replies:

"We must keep Bonaparte for some time longer at war, as a state of probation! Gracious God, sir, is war a state of probation? Is peace a rash system? Is it dangerous for nations to live in amity with each other? Is your vigilance, your policy, your common powers of observation, to be extinguished by putting an end to the horrors of war? Cannot this state of probation be as well undergone without adding to the catalogue of human sufferings? 'But we must *pause*.'‡ What! must the bowels of Great Britain be torn out—her best blood spilt—her treasure wasted—that you may make an experiment? Put yourselves—oh, that you would put yourselves in the field of battle, and learn to judge of the sort of horrors that you excite. In former wars, a man might at least have some feeling, some interest, that served to balance in his mind the impressions which a scene

* "Fox's Speeches," vol. vi. p. 394.

† "Parliamentary History," vol. xxxiv. p. 1343.

‡ This appears to have been the term used by Lord Carnarvon in the House of Lords.

of carnage and of death must inflict. If a man had been present at the battle of Blenheim, for instance, and had inquired the motive of the battle, there was not a soldier engaged who could not have satisfied his curiosity, and even, perhaps, allayed his feelings—they were fighting to repress the uncontrolled ambition of the *grand monarque.* But if a man were present now at a field of slaughter, and were to inquire for what they were fighting—'Fighting!' would be the answer; 'they are not fighting, they are *pausing.*' 'Why is that man expiring? Why is that other writhing with agony? What means this implacable fury?' The answer must be: 'You are quite wrong, sir; you deceive yourself. They are not fighting. Do not disturb them; they are merely *pausing!* This man is not expiring with agony—that man is not dead—he is only pausing! They are not angry with one another; they have now no cause of quarrel—but their country thinks there should be a pause. All that, you see, sir, is nothing like fighting—there is no harm, nor cruelty, nor bloodshed in it whatever; it is nothing more than a *political pause!* It is merely to try an experiment—to see whether Bonaparte will not behave himself better than heretofore; and in the meantime we have agreed to a pause, in pure friendship!' And is this the way, sir, that you are to show yourselves the advocates of order? You take up a system calculated to uncivilize the world, to destroy order, to trample on religion, to stifle in the heart not merely the generosity of noble sentiment, but the affections of social nature; and in the prosecution of this system, you spread terror and desolation all around you."*

In spite of this eloquent speech, in spite of the absurdity of the conduct of the Government, the division was—265 for Ministers, and only 64 for the Opposition.

* "Fox's Speeches," vol. vi. p. 420.

The war had been undertaken to oppose democracy, but that pretext over, the supremacy of a military chief served quite as well as democratic license, or any other pretence, the purpose of carnage and desolation.

It was not possible, surely, for the First Consul to show by experience his inclination and love of peace while he was forced by his enemies to carry on war with all the vigour he could command.

CHAPTER LVIII.

RESIGNATION OF PITT.—HIS CHARACTER AS A MINISTER.

On the 5th of February, 1801, Pitt resigned his offices of First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer. The reasons for his retirement are not difficult to penetrate, if we content ourselves with the accounts given by Pitt himself, and his most intimate friends, Mr. Dundas and Mr. Rose.

It appears from their statements that Pitt had always been of opinion that the Irish Union would strengthen the Empire, and among other ways, by making it safe to admit the Roman Catholics to office and to Parliament. He argued justly that a proportion of Roman Catholics who would be dangerous in an Irish House of Commons, or at Dublin Castle, would be harmless at Westminster and Whitehall. He saw, in addition to this absence of danger, the same advantages in investing a great body of the Irish people with privileges as his father had seen in trusting the inhabitants of the Highlands with arms. Canning once related in the House of Commons that, being on a visit at Walmer Castle, Pitt read at breakfast a letter from Lord Cornwallis saying that he could carry the Union, but he could not carry the admission of Roman Catholics to office and to Parliament. "Then, if I were you," exclaimed Canning,

"I would have neither." Pitt rebuked his impatience, and accepted the good within his reach. But, in the spirit of a great statesman, he perceived there might be a union by statute, but there would be no union of interests and affections while the Roman Catholics were excluded from the privileges and the prizes of the British Constitution. He accordingly began to prepare the means for admitting the Roman Catholic laity to political power, and for endowing the Roman Catholic clergy with a provision from the State. This project, if accomplished, would have crowned him with glory. Unfortunately, Pitt had not that sympathy with his political friends, or that cordial intercourse with his Sovereign, which could insure success. Had he persuaded his party to go with him, the King must have yielded. Had he overcome the scruples of the King, his party would have followed him with implicit obedience. But he communicated neither with his party nor with the King. Some of his colleagues, and some of his professed friends, were in the meantime secretly consulted by the King. Lord Clare, Chancellor of Ireland, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Lord Auckland, and Lord Loughborough have been mentioned, with more or less authority, as the private counsellors employed in advising the King to reject the advice of his constitutional Minister. They told him, it is said, that he was bound to prefer a doubtful construction of his coronation oath to the measure proposed by his Minister; and they infused into his weak mind and stubborn disposition scruples at once groundless and dangerous. Thus it happened that when Pitt wrote an official letter to the King advising concession to the Roman Catholics, he got a peremptory refusal. As the Minister chiefly responsible for the conduct of the war, he could not dispense with measures which he thought essential to his country's safety.

As the head of the Administration, he could not submit to be thwarted and overruled by the subordinates whom he had admitted to a share in the Government. He resigned. The event so shook the faculties of the King that his mind gave way, and for a time Pitt hesitated (naturally, one must admit), and was inclined, in view of such a catastrophe, to withdraw his resignation. But the King recovered, Mr. Addington professed his willingness to accept office, and Pitt's resignation became final.

Had the King and Mr. Addington been, either one or the other, men of less courage and determination than they were, Pitt must have returned to power, and Catholic emancipation would have been postponed only for a time. But the King, with his mind overwrought and shaken, feared the return of the question of Catholic Relief and of the Minister who had proposed it to him. Nor was he altogether displeased to have an adviser whose abilities would not overshadow him, and to exchange Lord Loughborough, whom he disliked, for Lord Eldon, whom he soon after designated as his own Chancellor.

Thus this wonderful change was accomplished, and Pitt, magnanimous in his retirement, did what he could to support his feeble successor.

Fox, like many others, thought for some time that the whole arrangement was a juggle. He writes to Mr. Fitzpatrick, on the 3rd of February, that the reports of Pitt's being out come from such concurrent authorities that he hardly knows how to disbelieve them. "The Speaker's being employed," he writes, "looks as if there was some strange juggle. . . . *Je n'y comprends goutte.*"* And again, on the 8th, he writes to Lord Holland:

* "Correspondence," vol. iii. p. 320.

"Addington, Chancellor of the Exchequer, as against Pitt! If I do believe it, it must be *quia incomprehensibile.*"*

A few days afterwards, he writes to Grey that his letter convinces him that it is not altogether the juggle that it appeared. On the 8th of February, he observes to his nephew: "If the King does make another Ministry and can keep it, first of all they will be very weak, which in itself is good, and, besides, they will feel the absolute necessity of making peace; and it is possible the inclinations of France may induce Bonaparte to make it with them, and peace, however obtained, is a real good." Fox was justified by the event. Mr. Addington found himself obliged to make peace, and the peace, disadvantageous as it was, put an end to the war against Jacobinism, and was thus "a real good."

Let us now, however, look back to the long Administration of Pitt, and to the condition in which he left the affairs of the country. From 1784 to 1792—from the day when he defeated the Whig party to the day when he abandoned a pacific policy—Pitt was a great Minister, repairing the ravages of a costly and unnecessary war, placing the finances in a sound condition, securing a surplus revenue, providing for the extension of our trade with France, and maintaining peace without neglecting our interests on the Continent of Europe. But when the French Revolution shook Europe with its anarchy, its madness, and its massacres, Pitt was bewildered by so new and so frightful an emergency. He was ignorant of the character of this great change, ignorant of the sources from which it sprang, unaware of the direction of the storm, little prepared for the ravages it might

* "Correspondence," vol. iii. p. 186.

cause, and still less prepared for the fertility it might create. Great Britain was, under his pilotage, like a noble frigate driven from her anchorage and drifting with the winds and the waves, uncertain amid the gloom, without a port in sight, or a chart to direct her course.

Hence Pitt, the Minister of peace, made war—made war for a long time, at great cost, and with immense bloodshed, but without any definite purpose or rational object.

It seems strange, at first sight, that a statesman of his genius, having at his command the resources of so great a nation as Great Britain, which were poured lavishly at his demand into the Exchequer, and an army so brave and so devoted as that which was landed in the Low Countries in 1793, should have failed so utterly in his Continental wars. A warlike career, which began with the evacuation of Holland and ended with the defeat at Marengo and the peace of Luneville, has scarcely a parallel in calamity. Yet the phenomenon is not incapable of explanation. Pitt never had before his eyes a clear object for which he was fighting; the pompous words with which he deceived others seem likewise to have deceived the orator himself.

When William III., Marlborough, and Godolphin, carried on that war of the Spanish Succession, which was rendered illustrious by the victories of Blenheim, Oudenarde, Malplaquet, and Ramillies—and which was marked by the capture of Minorca and Gibraltar—those great men had a definite object in view. To check and limit the ambition of Louis XIV., which had threatened the independence of Holland, and aimed at reaping the rich inheritance of Spain, was a clear, intelligible, and national object. The proud monarch of Versailles, defeated and humbled, was glad to owe his escape from the complete ruin of all his projects to

the intrigues of a party which quitted the path of glory abroad in order to restore the despotism of the Stuarts at home.

Neither was the Seven Years' War without its appeal to national sympathies. The courage in adversity, the skill in strategy, the successful defence against Austria, France, and Russia, which have made the name of Frederick the Great immortal, won the admiration of the British people. The contest in America of the sons of England against the ancient rival who sought to bind them in a circle of iron extending from the mouth of the Mississippi to that of the St. Lawrence roused the pride of the nation; the genius of Chatham inspired, amid the silent devotion of the House of Commons, those efforts which were consecrated by the blood of Wolfe and signalized by the early prowess of Washington.

But the war of 1793 had no such cause to inspire it, no such definite object to which it was to be directed.

The execution of Louis XVI. could not be atoned for by torrents of English blood. Prussia having failed in the main purpose of extinguishing the fire of the French Revolution, had no other design than that of robbing Poland of her independence. Pitt was profuse in scattering his subsidies, but he could not buy energy and zeal from Austria, because, as Mr. Grenville truly told him, she had not those qualities to sell. Mean rivalries between the two great German Powers, petty advantages to be gained, armies ordered not to fight, negotiations without sincerity—such were the scenes which disgusted Lord Malmesbury, Lord Spencer, and Mr. Grenville. The Empress of Russia, seated on a blood-stained throne, satisfied with the massacre of Praga, the annihilation of Poland, and the indulgence of

unbounded licentiousness, gave only invectives and manifestoes to the cause of law and order.

But while Pitt had no definite objects to attain, and no sincere allies to assist him, he contrived to exasperate France by supporting the Royalists, and to dissolve the alliance with Prussia by his partiality for Austria.

With a view to get money for the war without exciting popular discontent, Pitt carried on his costly operations on credit, and impaired the finances of the country. He borrowed without stint, thinking every year that the state of their finances must force the French nation to submit. Then, in order to get his loans on better terms in the money-market, he took care that the public creditor should receive for ever the 4 or 5 per cent., or whatever other interest the nation might be forced to pay in a year of penury and distress. This was contrived by borrowing in the three per cents at 60, instead of borrowing in five per cents at 98.

The consequence is, that although the three per cents have since risen at times to 94 or 95, the nation has paid not at the rate of 3¼ per cent., but at the rate of 4 or 5 per cent. or upwards, after fifty years of peace.

So with regard to paper currency. At the beginning of his war administration, Pitt predicted that France would soon be obliged to make peace on account of her assignats. At the end of the war, France had restored her metallic currency, while England was carrying on her military and naval operations with inconvertible bank paper.

When all these calamities are considered, it is no wonder to find Fox writing as the sum of his opinions: "Pitt was a bad Minister. He is out. I am glad." *

There were, however, great redeeming features in Pitt's

* "Correspondence," vol. iii. p. 324.

character as a Minister. I do not reckon among them his brilliancy as an orator, for that brilliancy served only to dazzle and mislead. But his unshaken resolution, his manful struggle against increasing perils, his determination to hold aloft the flag of his country, neither dismayed by danger nor perplexed by difficulty, place him, if not in the list of successful Ministers, high in the roll of great men.

This striking quality it was which made the English people follow him as a leader, and, in spite of reverses, look to him in the hour of danger as their hero and their hope.

It is curious to observe also how much the war gained in popularity in spite of disasters which might have sunk the hopes of a nation less resolute and less spirited than the English. The insolence of the French Directory, the heat of national rivalry, the excitement of the contest, so far inflamed the minds of the people that, although the wish for peace was general, the fear of humiliation was the stronger and more prevailing sentiment; thus, until the Government proclaimed peace, the nation was silent.

CHAPTER LIX.

ADDINGTON ADMINISTRATION.—MR. GREY'S MOTION ON THE STATE OF THE NATION.

WHEN Fox was once convinced that the resignations were not a juggle, and that Pitt seriously meant to retire, he took a view of the new arrangement different from that of his friends: "But, juggle or no juggle, what will be the consequences? This Ministry cannot last, say our friends; so say not I, unless the public misfortunes should be such as would have equally forced out the others. The King's power is, as we know, great, and, when exerted, in conjunction with his ally, the Church, and, therefore, in the way and upon the points which he likes best, and into which he will enter with the greatest spirit, he will not easily be foiled; and you may be sure this Ministry is one quite to his heart's content."*

The King, in approving Mr. Addington's arrangements for the Ministry, wrote to him: "The King cannot find words sufficiently expressive of his Majesty's cordial approbation of the whole arrangements which *his own Chancellor of the Exchequer* has wisely, and, his Majesty chooses to add, most correctly recommended."†

The King revealed in this manner his joy at having a

* "Correspondence," vol. iii. p. 325.

† Stanhope's "Life of Pitt," vol. iii. p. 321.

Minister who had not the brilliant genius and large views of Pitt. In the same spirit, he called Lord Eldon "his own Lord Chancellor." In fact, the Ministry suited him exactly. If he was bigoted, they were bigoted; if he was narrow-minded, they were narrow-minded; if his notions were weak, their notions were weak likewise. Of Mr. Addington it was truly said:

> "And but little though he meant,
> He meant that little well."

In the same letter to Lord Lauderdale from which I have already quoted, Fox goes on to say: "But what ought to be the conduct of Grey and his friends?" He resolves this question, both for himself and his party, by approving Mr. Grey's motion on the State of the Nation, and declaring his intention to attend it.

"Now for myself: I have consented (whether right or wrong, God knows, for I think differently about it every five minutes) to attend Grey's motion on the State of the Nation on Monday, 2nd of March. My ground is specious enough—that having absented myself because the influence of the late Ministers had made the proceedings of the House of Commons a farce, I return to put the House to the test whether they will, by an implicit confidence, make themselves the same abject tools of the present Government as they were of the last. The State of the Nation of course involves everything, &c." It is because "the State of the Nation of course involves everything," and, among other things, a want of confidence, that it was imprudent in the lovers of peace to express distrust at the very outset of the only possible Ministry from whom peace could be obtained. Any other form of motion would, as a means of obtaining a declaration of policy, have been preferable.

Fox ends his letters in these terms: "When we are beat on the State of the Nation, I mean to attend no more; unless the Catholic question is brought on, and, in that case, upon that only. Do you think they could have picked out any one fellow in the House of Commons so sure to make a foolish figure in this new situation as Addington? I think not."*

Although this remark might be perfectly true, yet it was also true that Pitt was sure (to use a phrase of his father) to lend Addington his majority to carry on the Government. He could not disown all his former policy. It was, therefore, unwise of Fox and Grey to bring to a test the very question on which they were certain to be defeated by the same majority which had supported Pitt against them from the very beginning of the war.

Prudence would have counselled the Whig Opposition, therefore, to have awaited in silence the effects of the change of Ministry. But such was not their course. On the 25th of March, Mr. Grey, in a clear argumentative speech, moved for a Committee of the whole House on the State of the Nation, or, in other words, for a vote of want of confidence in the Administration.

Pitt, who wished to help the new Ministry, and still more to defeat his old opponents, had an easy task in endeavouring to persuade the House of Commons not to depart from the errors which for nine years they had continued to sanction.

It seemed, indeed, but poor logic to say that, because Parliament had waged war against a Jacobin convention which summoned all the nations of Europe to overthrow their governments, they must, therefore, wage war against a

* "Correspondence," vol. iii. p. 328.

military dictator who had restored order in France, and was at peace with nearly all the sovereigns of the Continent. But that which as argument was worthless was, as an appeal to party pride and party feeling, irresistible. The House of Commons, except under the sense of some great and crushing reverse, was sure not to abandon the leader it had followed and accept the advice it had constantly rejected.

Pitt was not ashamed, on this occasion, to invent new causes for the war. No more was said of revolutionary fury, of the decree of the 19th of November, of the opening of the Scheldt. We had gone to war, it appeared, for three other objects—viz., the restoration of the Bourbons, the maintenance of our internal security, and the preservation of our independence. Adopting this view, Pitt exulted in the thought that although we had not attained the first object, we had been successful in the second and third. But might it not have been asked why those objects had been put to hazard? Pitt resembled a man who should voluntarily and rashly stake his house and lands on a throw of the dice, and boast exceedingly that, although he had lost some thousands of pounds, he had not been ruined by the venture. What was most remarkable, however, in Pitt's speech was the homage he paid to the abilities of Fox. In speaking of the appointment of Lord Hawkesbury as Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, he said: "He was ready to ask gentlemen on the other side if they knew any one among themselves who was superior to his noble friend. Let them give him the answer. He should like to take the opinions of the different individuals on the other side, if it were not a painful thing to put to their modesty, whether any one among them, except one hon. gentleman whose attendance was of late so rare that he might almost be considered as a new member, whose transcendant talents, indeed,

made him an exception to almost any rule in everything that required uncommon powers, but whose conduct was also what ought, generally speaking, to be an exception," &c.

Again, in speaking of the course pursued by Fox in 1782 with reference to the armed neutrality, Pitt said: "It was during the short time, sir, that the hon. gentleman filled the office of Secretary of State, who, from the greatness of his genius, might have been led to those bold attempts which by common minds might be considered rashness—it was during that short period," &c.

Pitt vindicated with much dignity and complete justice his retirement from the councils of the Crown when he was unable to carry a measure which he thought important for the welfare of the country. The distinction which he drew between allowing Roman Catholics to enter Parliament and hold office under the Crown before the union of the Parliaments and afterwards was striking. The measure he proposed was wise; the moment he chose for it was opportune. But the Minister who was permitted to squander millions of treasure, and throw away thousands of lives without an object, was not permitted by his Sovereign, by Parliament, or by his party, to carry a great measure of enlightened liberality, of undoubted justice, and of large and beneficial policy.

Fox rose after Pitt, and taking advantage of the title of a "new member," by which Pitt had designated him, asked leave to avail himself of the indulgence which the House usually shows to a person of that description. In discussing the question at issue with the Northern Powers, he reduced that question to three parts—namely, free bottoms making free goods, the contraband of war, the right of search under convoy. After discussing these questions with infinite ability, he refuted Mr. Dundas's assertions that the war had been suc-

cessful. But when he came to the naval part of the war, he said: "Not one word that I have ever uttered, or that ever came out of the lips of any friend of mine on this side of the House, has tended, even in the most distant degree, to underrate the achievements of our fleets; and I will leave the House to judge whether any persons in it or out of it have dwelt with more rapture upon the triumphs of that branch of the service than we have done. . . . It is in the nature of naval tactics that a great deal depends upon the officers and men, upon wind and weather; in land operations, a good plan is almost everything. Yet the merit of the Admiralty is indisputable. It is true there are parts of the administration of Earl Spencer (for whom my personal respect is considerable) not free from blame, particularly what related to the invasion of Ireland; but where the general system has been judicious and prosperous, it would be invidious to dwell upon a few errors."

After a masterly analysis of the events of the war and their effects, Fox said: "These, sir, are some of the internal effects of this war, which both the right hon. gentlemen venture to compare with former contentions against France. We have taken more, they tell us, than even in the Seven Years' War; and, therefore, this surpasses that in success. Good God! sir, what effect does a confidence in the votes of this House produce upon the understandings of men of abilities? To talk of this war, and the Seven Years' War! 'We have destroyed the commerce of France, we have taken their islands,' say you; but these, I say, were not the objects of the war. If you have destroyed the commerce of France, you have destroyed it at the expense of near three hundred millions of debt. If you have taken the French islands, you have made a bootless capture; for you are ready enough to

restore them as the price of peace. You have taken islands, but you have, at the same time, laid the House of Austria prostrate at the feet of triumphant France. Have you restored monarchy? Its very hopes are entombed for ever. Have you reduced the power of France? France is aggrandized beyond the wildest dreams of former ambition. Have you driven her within her ancient frontiers? She has enlarged herself to the Rhine and to the Alps, and added five millions to her population in the centre of Europe. You had all the great States of Europe for your allies against France. What is become of them? All that you have not ruined are your determined enemies. Where are the neutral Powers? Every one of them leagued with this very France for your destruction. Could all this be chance? No, sir; it is the true succession of effect to cause. It is the legitimate issue of your own system. You began in foolishness, and you end in mischief. Tell me one single object of the war that you have obtained? Tell me one evil that you have not brought upon your country? Yet this House will not inquire. The right hon. gentleman (Mr. Dundas) says: 'We have had more difficulties to encounter than any former Government; for we had constantly thwarting us the implacable monster Jacobinism.' Sir, Jacobinism has in it no property so sure as the right hon. gentleman's system to propagate and confirm it. That system has given to Jacobinism life and nutriment, strength and maturity, which it could not have derived from any other source. Bent upon crushing every idea of any reform, they resolved to stifle the once free genius of the English mind, and suspend some of the most valuable parts of the English Constitution, rather than yield one jot.

"Hence their administration is marked, in this country, by a succession of infringements upon the dearest rights of

the people—by invasions and rebellions in another country. The parent source of all these disorders is that baneful impolicy in which both the right hon. gentlemen endeavour to implicate the House." *

Turning to the description of the new Ministry, which he said he found to be a most unpleasant part of the night's discussion, he spoke thus coldly, but not bitterly, of the Chancellor of the Exchequer:

"The late Chancellor of the Exchequer, not, perhaps, quite freely from redundancy, has blended with his panegyric of the right hon. gentleman over against me (Mr. Addington) a gaudy picture of the importance of the chair which you, sir, occupy. I agree that the office of Speaker is a high and honourable station. It is certainly the first dignity in this House; and, I suppose, it was *merely* for the public good that both your predecessors descended from that altitude to *inferior places*, but happening to be at the same time situations of infinitely more emolument and power. A man, however, may be an excellent Chairman of this House, as the late Speaker undoubtedly was, without being exactly qualified for the office of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. At the present moment, this is all that I think it necessary to say with regard to the respectable gentleman whom you, sir, have succeeded." †

Coming next to the cause of Pitt's resignation, Fox spoke out with his usual boldness in the assertion of a great principle of freedom:

"Before I proceed to the conclusion of this part of my subject, I must beg leave to say something upon this much-talked-of subject of Catholic emancipation. As to the mere word 'emancipation,' I agree with the right hon. gentleman

* "Fox's Speeches," vol. vi. p. 440. † Ibid. p. 443.

(Mr. Pitt) that the expression is not the best adapted to the case. It is not emancipation in the ordinary meaning of the term that the Catholic wants, or that the Government can grant; it is the removal of the civil disabilities that remain, and that remain for no end either of security, of policy, or of prudence—insulting and vexatious distinctions, beneficial to no interest whatever, but the fruitful source of jealousy, discord, and national weakness. The right hon. gentleman talks of the King's reign having been a series of concessions to the Catholics. Sir, the King's reign is marked by no concessions which the blameless conduct of the Catholics was not calculated to exact from the most unwilling Government in the world. He talks of what has been given to the Catholics. Sir, you give them nothing, while you deprive them of the right to sit in this House. I know of no political rights which ought not to be common to all the King's subjects, and I am sure that a system of proscription, on account of theological differences, will for ever be found not more unjust and absurd than pernicious. If this principle needed illustration, Ireland affords it beyond the power of controversy. Divided by the Government, it presents a constant temptation to your enemy. Rebellion is the fruit of bad policy, and invasion is encouraged by disunion." *

Again: "As a right, the right right hon. gentleman denies the claim of the Catholics. He would give them nothing as a right; but he thinks the concession expedient. This, sir, is not my sense of the Catholic claim. I would grant it not merely because it is expedient, but because it is just. Those who press the doctrine of virtual representation to the utmost length never ventured to carry it so far as even to pretend that it extended to the privation of the Catholic body. Catho-

* "Fox's Speeches," vol. vi. p 444.

lics, in my opinion, have rights as well as Protestants. They have both rights conjointly, not resting upon light or frail grounds, but forming the very base and foundation of our civil system; and the Government which does not acknowledge these rights, the rights of man in the strictest sense of the word (notwithstanding the constant clamour against, and abuse of, that phrase), not as theories and speculations, but as active and living principles, is not, and cannot be, a legitimate Government.

"The inferences to be drawn from the style of argument which has been used in defence of the duration of these dreadful laws in Ireland furnish a sentence of condemnation against the Government of that country much stronger than any that was ever used by those who so unavailingly raised their voices against a system of terror, of free quarters, of conflagration, and torture. If it be true, as they allege, that treason has tainted that people to the bone—if the poison of Jacobinism, as they call it, pervade the whole mind of the multitude—if disloyalty be so rooted and so universal that military despotism can alone make the country habitable—it would be against the experience of the world that such a wide and deadly disaffection could, or ever did, exist in any nation on the globe except from the faults of its governors.

"To this country, too—to England—what a contradiction is the conduct of these honourable gentlemen to their professions! This nation was to reap marvellous blessings from the Union; but of what benefit is the junction of four or five millions of traitors? Such, the laws proposed by these honourable gentlemen tell you, the Irish are; but such, I tell you, they are not. A grosser outrage upon truth, a greater libel upon a generous people, never before was uttered or insinuated. They who can find reason for all this in any supposed de-

pravity of the Irish totally misunderstand their character. Sir, I love the Irish nation. I know a great deal of that people. I know much of Ireland from having seen it; I know more from private friendship with individuals. The Irish may have their faults, like others. They may have a quick feeling of injury, and not be very patient under it; but I do affirm that, of all their characteristics, there is not one feature more predominant in every class of the country, from the highest to the lowest order, than gratitude for benefits and sensibility to kindness. Change your system towards that country, and you will find them another sort of men. Let impartiality, justice, and clemency, take place of prejudice, oppression, and vengeance, and you will not want the aid of martial law or the terror of military execution."*

The division was of course adverse to the Whig party. It was a hopeless task to assail a Ministry covered by the broad shield of Pitt. There divided:

For Mr. Grey	105
Against	291
Majority . . .	186

In a debate in the House of Lords, after two of the new ministers had spoken, the Marquis of Lansdowne, (formerly Lord Shelburne) said: "I think we had from the former Ministry too much of eloquence, and oratory, and all that sort of thing, and I am glad to see that the two noble lords opposite take quite a different line."

* "Speeches," vol. vi. p. 447.

CHAPTER LX.

CONDUCT AND CORRESPONDENCE OF FOX FROM MR. GREY'S MOTION TO THE PEACE OF AMIENS, 1801.—PEACE OF AMIENS.

Fox kept his promise that, after Mr. Grey's motion, he would attend no more that Session, except on the question of Mr. Horne Tooke's eligibility as a clergyman to a seat in the House of Commons, upon which he took the affirmative side. To an earnest request from his nephew, Lord Holland, that he would go to London, he replies in a letter dated—

"St. Anne's Hill; Sunday, April 19th, 1801.

"Never did a letter arrive in a worse time, my dear young one, than yours this morning—a sweet westerly wind, a beautiful sun, all the thorns and elms just budding, and the nightingales just beginning to sing, though the blackbirds and thrushes would have been quite sufficient, without the return of those *seceders*, to have refuted any arguments in your letter. Seriously speaking, I cannot conceive what you mean by everybody agreeing that something may be *now* done. I beg, at least, not to be included among the holders of that opinion, for, as it appears to me, there never was a moment when all exertion on our part was more certain to be useless, if not worse. Pray, therefore, put a stop to any trouble or expense as soon as possible that you or any one else have been at or are incurring about a house. My present notion

is that, except for Tooke's business (which I could not desert without shabbiness) and the May Whig Club, I shall go to town no more this year. My feeling is this: that notwithstanding nightingales, flowers, literature, history, &c., all which, however, I conceive to be good and substantial reasons for staying here, I would nevertheless go to town if I saw any chance of my going being serviceable to the public, or (which, in my view of things, is exactly the same thing) to the party which I love both as a party, and on account of many of the individuals who compose it. I feel myself quite sure that this is not now the case, and that if I were to go, the best I could hope for would be that I should do no mischief; and with such a hope only, you will allow that I cannot be expected to make any great sacrifice of my own comforts and enjoyments."*

His correspondence, both on literature and politics, was continued with activity.

On the 2nd of April, he writes to Fitzpatrick that he hears the King is so ill again that something "will have to be done," and begs Fitzpatrick, in case that report is confirmed, to make no delay in coming to him. He adds: "Mrs. A. makes me write this, because she knows how helpless I am in difficult circumstances without advice." †

About the same time, he writes to Fitzpatrick: "Bonaparte has been moderate and wise, and the pacific character seems to me what he at this time so much affects, that my opinion is, this Ministry, if they will give up the nonsensical neutral question, may have peace with him." ‡

Fox was at this time of opinion that those who have any wish to be ever concerned in public affairs ought to move

* "Correspondence," vol. iii. p. 189.

† Ibid. p. 332. ‡ Ibid. p. 334.

in the Catholic question. "For me, who have no such wish, but quite the contrary, it is another thing; and, if others do not think of moving it, I shall not urge them to it."*

When Mr. Grey's father, Sir Charles Grey, was made a Peer, he writes thus to Mr. Grey: "I am very much concerned indeed to hear of your father's peerage, more especially as I understand it vexes you very much. It is undoubtedly a provoking event; but, according to my notion, the Constitution of the country is declining so rapidly, that the House of Commons has, in a great measure, ceased, and will shortly entirely cease, to be a place of much importance." †

Such was the singular opinion of Fox as to the state of the Constitution, founded on his exaggerated view of the changes which Pitt had made expressly for temporary objects, and of temporary duration.

Fox's opinion of the practicability of making peace with the First Consul of France was better founded, and was soon to be remarkably confirmed; for the administration of Mr. Addington seemed destined to the good fortune which had so generally been wanting to their predecessors. An expedition of Pitt which accident or incapacity had kept for ten months in harbour or at sea landed, in the month of March, in Egypt, and, on the 21st of that month, the British army gained that brilliant victory of Aboukir, where the laurel was mingled with the cypress. For, in the full tide of success, their heroic chief, Sir Ralph Abercromby, received a fatal wound. Few men have worn a soldier's uniform with greater honour; he was a brave and skilful commander, no less distinguished for political wisdom and a humane heart than for military knowledge. In Ireland, he had deplored, and endea-

* "Correspondence," vol. iii. p. 334. † Ibid. p. 340.

voured to check, the brutal excesses of faction. In Holland and in Egypt, he upheld, with judicious boldness and unfailing courage, the military reputation of his country. His victory of Aboukir opened the way for the conquest of Egypt. The Turks hastened to swell the ranks of General Hutchinson, his successor, and, at the end of August, a convention was signed by which the French agreed to evacuate Egypt and return to France.

The news of the victory of Aboukir caused great joy in England; but, before the subsequent events were known in London, still greater cause of rejoicing had occurred.

Early in April, Ministers had taken measures to ascertain whether the First Consul would listen to negotiations for peace. The British Government were informed in reply that they might address themselves to M. Otto, who was employed in London in settling a cartel for the exchange of prisoners. From M. Otto they obtained a specious letter declaring the First Consul's love of peace, and demanding a maritime truce, together with an immediate and full communication respecting the terms and preliminaries of peace. The maritime armistice was declined, but Lord Hawkesbury, wiser than Lord Grenville, at once complied with the latter of these demands. He declared that England would give up all her conquests except Martinique, Ceylon, Malta, Trinidad, Tobago, Demerara, Essequibo, and Berbice, on condition that the French should evacuate Egypt, that the Cape of Good Hope should be a free port, and the Prince of Orange receive an indemnity.

These demands were thought excessive, and as a maritime truce was refused, the First Consul deemed it prudent to watch the course of events in Egypt before he either insisted on retaining a conquest which he could not keep, or con-

sented to give up what his enemy could not wrest from him. But, at the end of May, M. Otto again addressed Lord Hawkesbury, lamenting that two months had passed without any progress towards peace being made, and again requesting a communication of the proposed terms.

Lord Hawkesbury replied that, if Europe could be put back into its former condition, his Majesty would willingly give up all his conquests, but if that could not be, the French Government might allow that the King would be justified in retaining part of his conquests to give security to his dominions, and to serve as a counterpoise to the important acquisitions of France.

This principle was too reasonable, or, at least, too plausible, to be denied, and, accordingly, all that remained was to weigh the conquests which England proposed to retain, and consider whether they were more than adequate to her present strength, her means of continuing the war, and her political position in the world. In striking this balance with France, the Minister was assisted by the important counsels of Pitt; and towards the end of September, when the communications were coming to a close, it may be said that the ex-Minister, no longer hampered with Lord Grenville, took into his own hands the conduct of the negotiation. Lord Malmesbury says in his diary: "Pitt counselled and, of course, directed the whole." At length, on the 1st of October, the preliminaries of peace were signed in London by Lord Hawkesbury and M. Otto.

England, by this treaty, gave up Malta, Minorca, Demerara, Essequibo, Martinique, the Cape of Good Hope, Pondicherry, and all other possessions conquered from her enemies, except Trinidad and Ceylon. Egypt was to be restored to the Porte; Malta to be given back to the Order

of St. John of Jerusalem, and to be placed under the protection of a third Power; the Republic of the Seven Islands was to be recognised, and Porto Ferrajo to be evacuated. The Fisheries on the coast of Newfoundland and in the Gulf of St. Lawrence were to be restored to their former state. France was to evacuate Naples and the Roman territory.

On the other hand, when it is observed that by this peace, France became the acknowledged mistress of Belgium and the left bank of the Rhine directly, and of Holland and Italy indirectly, that she surrounded herself with dependent republics and tributary kings, and reigned supreme arbiter of Europe—when it is further considered that an ambitious and restless military dictator was the organ and the director of this vast power, and when it is remembered that the war was undertaken in order to save the independence of Holland, to close the Scheldt, and to curb the ambition of France—one may wonder that Pitt should have prompted, and the House of Commons have accepted, such a peace. Fox, indeed, seems to have viewed the peace not only as in itself desirable, but as a joyful event, because it recorded the triumph of France in the struggle against the attempt of the sovereigns of Europe to impose on her an internal government by foreign force—an attempt which he justly viewed with the utmost abhorrence. Unfortunately, in the blaze of glory which surrounded the French Consul, Fox omitted to mark with precision the overwhelming power which France now held, and was to hold, in future, with the assent of Europe. In fact, while we combated an imaginary foe under the names of "the contagion of French principles," "the overthrow of social order," "the destruction of all the principles of religion and morality," and various other

spectres, which, though they had neither flesh nor bone, had affrighted the nation into war, we had unwittingly raised up a real and substantial danger.

France had, in fact, now become a Power of such vast proportions as to threaten the independence of the remaining States of Europe.

She was more formidable in 1801 than she had been in 1701, when William III. was forging the armour of the Grand Alliance to resist her ambition. It was at this time, however, that Pitt, having gone to war at a wrong time, and squandered resources which he ought to have husbanded, put a pen into the hands of his successors to sign a treaty of peace. Fox, at a crowded public meeting at the Shakespeare Tavern, assembled for the purpose of celebrating the anniversary of the Westminster election, declared "that the peace was glorious to France—glorious to the First Consul. Ought it not to be so? Ought not glory to be the reward of such a glorious struggle? France had set an example that would be highly useful to all the nations of the earth, and, above all, to Great Britain."*

Fox's letters to his private friends disclose still further his opinions. I give three of them in the order in which they appear to have been written:

TO THE HON. T. MAITLAND.

"1801.

"DEAR MAITLAND,—I am much obliged to you for your two letters, and entirely agree with you that the thing must have happened from some sudden turn here. However it may have happened, it is an excellent thing, and I do not like it any the worse for its being so very triumphant a peace for France,

* *Morning Chronicle*, 1801.

who, except Ancona, does not give up any part of her conquests. Indemnity for the past and security for the future are now evidently construed into Ceylon and Trinidad. I do not know why you should consider it, however, as a mere truce. I hope better. The sense of humiliation in the Government here will certainly be lost in the extreme popularity of the measure. I expect there never was joy more universal and unfeigned, and this rascally people are quite overjoyed at receiving from Ministers what, if they had dared to ask it, could not have been refused them at almost any period of the war. Will the Ministers have the impudence to say that there was any time (much less that when Bonaparte's offer was refused) when we might not have had terms as good? Bonaparte's triumph is now complete indeed; and, since there is to be no political liberty in the world, I really believe he is the fittest person to be the master." *

TO THE HON. CHARLES GREY.

"St. Anne's Hill, October 12th.

"DEAR GREY,—You will probably have learnt from the newspapers that at the Shakespeare I expressed my perfect approbation of the peace. I think I could do no otherwise, though, upon this as upon other occasions, I should have been glad if it had been possible to have known your opinion. I have, however, no doubt but that it is the language we ought all to hold, the question not being between peace now and peace years ago, nor even between these terms of peace and any others, but simply between this peace, such as it is, and a continuation of the war. How Pitt will defend it it is difficult to conceive; but it is universally believed he will. What indemnity or

* "Correspondence," vol. iii. p. 344.

security he will find I know not, nor how he can deny that these or better terms were to be had long ago, and, consequently, that all the money and lives lost since that period, at least, have been squandered wantonly and wickedly. You will have observed, of course, that France does not give up one acre she possessed before the war or conquered during the course of it. Windham is said to be miserable—Lord Buckingham, &c., &c., are much against it; but whether Lord Grenville is included in this description I have not learned with certainty. I mean to give it my support some one day in the House of Commons, but whether that day shall be the day of the Address will depend, in a great measure, upon your plans. If you mean to be in the House the first day, I will be there, too; but if you defer your coming till the day the preliminaries are taken into consideration, I had rather be there the same day. I am sure you cannot differ materially with me about the line to be taken.

"The worse the conduct of the late Ministry, the more excusable an inglorious peace, and *vice versâ*. The approbation of such a peace as this is the most decided condemnation of them. With regard to the present men, this should be put home, and that their only defence must consist in the desperate state of things produced by their predecessors. In regard to public opinion upon the subject, my belief is that there never was more genuine and general joy upon any public event. I know that in London, and I heard, too, in Liverpool, there are some who abuse it, but, in general, it is far otherwise. Even those who are most dissatisfied only say that *every gentleman* is against it and every blackguard for it. I dare say Pitt has taken, upon the whole, the most judicious line, because, both I and you,

who do not wish him well, would rather have wished, probably, that he had taken a different one; but, on the other hand, he must make a figure both ridiculous and odious. Pray write a line. I cannot attend more than one or two days at most; but, both in the choice of those days, and as far as I can consistently in the line I shall take when I do attend, I wish to be entirely guided by your wishes and opinion.

"Yours affectionately,

"C. J. Fox." *

TO SAME.

"St. Anne's, October 22nd.

"DEAR GREY,—I do not know whether my speech was or was not misrepresented, but I think it very likely that it really was liable to the interpretation you deprecate, and in that respect, no doubt, it was indiscreet; but you know that of late I have not considered much for myself what in a political view may or may not be judicious. I feel, however, as you do, that the power of France is truly alarming; but the hope of diminishing or restraining that power has been, in my opinion, long *gone by*. Nor do I think that any arrangement of those points which alone were (or, indeed, could be) in discussion during the late negotiation would much have affected that question. If, for instance, we had retained Martinique, Sta. Lucia, the Cape of Good Hope, Pondicherry, &c., I do not think we should have been a whit less in danger from France in time to come. If I were inclined to cavil at all at the terms, I rather think I should blame the having preferred Trinidad or even Ceylon to Minorca or Malta, for a port in the Mediterranean is something. I have heard nothing

* "Correspondence," vol. iii. p. 345.

more of the probable conduct of individuals since I wrote last. Pitt will support the peace, certainly; but I do not agree with you that he is bound to do so from his conduct respecting the Lisle negotiation. He has since that time rejected two offers from Bonaparte, at periods when he could not doubt but he might have as good terms as these, and has disclosed that his proposal at Lisle, though sincere, was rather in compliance with the public opinion than from his own; and (he thinks) the rejection of it by the French was an *escape* on our part. Besides, the French have carried their point, which he stated to be so intolerable, of not negotiating concerning any territory annexed to the Republic. I wish, as you do, that the French had shown more spirit in preserving their own liberty; but that is not, strictly speaking, our affair. The power of the Republic is certainly an evil; but it is an evil which has been the unavoidable result of the nature of the attack against it. If the war had continued, this evil would probably have become greater, or, at least, our means of resisting upon future occasions would most certainly have become less.

"I could have been very well content to stay till the day upon the preliminaries, but Fitzpatrick's opinion and yours seeming to be that the first day is the proper one, I shall attend on the Address, but not speak to *make* a debate—only in case one happens to give me an opportunity. I fear, however, that whatever happens, I cannot, with propriety, be absent on the day when the peace makes the regular subject; and so I shall have two days instead of one, which is in itself bad enough, beside the increased chance of saying indiscreet things, which I feel to be very great; for the truth is, I am gone something further in hate to the English Government than perhaps you and the rest of my friends are, and certainly

further than can with prudence be avowed. The triumph of the French Government over the English does, in fact, afford me a degree of pleasure which it is very difficult to disguise. I take for granted Sheridan will *not* be there, and that if he is, he cannot abstain from abusing the peace. As to the ruin of England being sealed, I do not know how that may be; but what I am clear in is, that the only chance of her being saved arises from the peace having been made this year; every evil (and there may be many) which may be attendant on the peace would have been ten times worse upon a peace which had happened later. As to your coming, if it is inconvenient to you, I am sure I have not the face to press it; but yet I own that, upon the day of the preliminaries, I think you *ought* to be there, and may hereafter regret your absence."*

While no one can justify the length to which Fox carried his dislike to his own Government, yet, on the other hand, there is little merit in the undistinguishing patriotism which embraces with ardour every enterprise and every cause which is undertaken or supported by the country in which a man is born. Had Fox been a Spaniard of the sixteenth century, he might, without the blame of posterity, have disapproved of the Inquisition and of the cruelties of Pizarro; or, if of the seventeenth, he might have felt no joy in the triumphs of the Duke of Alva; or, had he been a subject of Louis XIV., he might have rejoiced that Holland was not subdued, and he might possibly have lamented the devastation of the Palatinate. Patriotism need not be blind, though her sight may be obscured by her affections.

Fox was a lover of liberty, of justice, and of the independence of nations. Like Lord Chatham, he rejoiced that

* "Correspondence," vol. iii. p. 347.

America had resisted; he was glad of the success of the rebellion in America, and of Burgoyne's capitulation, and he would have preferred, no doubt, the independence of France, even under Robespierre, to her subjugation under the German Sovereigns or her partition among the despotic States of Europe.

In cherishing these sentiments, he magnified to himself the faults of his own country, and made a wrong estimate of the injuries inflicted by Pitt on the Constitution.

But the war of 1793, directed as it was to no national object, defended on false pretences, and conducted with improvidence and folly, was justly the object of his abhorrence—an abhorrence which seems to me to have been founded on a right appreciation of the interests of England as well as a due regard for the independence of Europe.

When the peace was announced, Sheridan having heard Mr. Francis say that the peace was a peace everybody was glad of, but nobody proud of, went to the House of Commons and repeated the phrase. He got much credit for the justice of the observation.

The debates which soon after took place in the two Houses of Parliament upon the preliminaries of peace were very memorable.

The peace was supported by Pitt and Fox in the House of Commons, and the Duke of Bedford in the House of Lords. It was attacked with much vehemence and elaborate argument by Lord Grenville, Earl Temple, Lord Leveson Gower, and, above all, by Mr. Windham.

The obvious blot in the treaty was the surrender of both Malta and Minorca. Pitt defended the preference given to Trinidad and Ceylon by the singular reason that we ought not without necessity to mortify France. He confessed that

he had hoped for a restoration of the French monarchy, though he had never insisted upon it. "There were periods during the continuance of the war," he said, "in which I had hopes of being able to put together the scattered fragments of that great and venerable edifice; to have restored the exiled nobility of France; to have restored a Government certainly not free from defects, but built upon sober and regular foundations, instead of that mad system of innovation which threatened, and had nearly accomplished, the destruction of Europe.

> "'Me si fata meis paterentur ducere vitam
> Auspiciis, et sponte meâ componere curas;
> Urbem Trojanam primum dulcesque meorum
> Reliquias colerem, Priami tecta alta manerent,
> Et recidiva manu posuissem Pergama victis.'"

Pitt, putting himself in the place of a French Royalist, avowed that he should "to his dying day lament that there were not on the part of the other Powers of Europe efforts corresponding to our own for the accomplishment of that great wish."

Fox took, in many respects, a very different line. He lamented that Malta had not been obtained rather than Ceylon and Trinidad; "Desiring peace most ardently, and thinking and hoping it may be a lasting one, I still cannot put entirely out of my consideration the possibility of future wars between the two countries. In any such event, surely Malta would be a more important possession than either Ceylon or Trinidad."

Returning to the main question, he said he saw no reason to suppose that a better peace could have been obtained. The Ministers, he supposed, well knew that, by insisting upon Malta or the Cape, they must have made peace on worse terms or have continued the war.

"They have not sought to delude us by the jargon of their predecessors, or by assertions of the French being on the brink of bankruptcy. They had too much good sense to do it."

Fox said in a later portion of his speech:

"Sir, there are many persons who think and lament that the peace is a glorious one for France. If the peace be glorious for France without being inglorious to England, it will not give me any concern that it is so. Upon this point, the feelings and opinions of men must depend in a great measure upon their conceptions of the causes of the war. If one of the objects of the war was the restoration of the ancient despotism of France, than which I defy any man to produce in the history of the world a more accursed one—if, I say, that was one of the objects of the war, why then I say it is to me an additional recommendation of the peace, that it has been obtained without the accomplishment of such an object."*

The most remarkable speech made against the peace was delivered on the Report. It was made by Mr. Windham, who was too ill to attend the debate of the first night.

Mr. Windham was a man of so quick and subtle an intellect, and of such powers of fancy, and at the same time of so eccentric and paradoxical a judgment, that every one was delighted to listen to him as an orator, while few were prepared to follow him as a guide. His phrases and allusions were singularly happy. In opposing proposals of reform at a time when the people were quiet, he compared the country to the valetudinarian in the *Spectator* who had every symptom of the gout except pain. But when the people were growing eager for reform, he cried, with equal felicity of illustration: "Who would repair his house in the hurricane season?"

* "Parliamentary History," vol. xxxvi. p. 72–6.

Describing the conquests of the French Republicans, he had said: "They march over Europe, sometimes their principles making way for their arms, sometimes their arms making way for their principles, sometimes, like a chain-shot, moving both together."

Endowed with a thoughtful and expressive countenance, with a tall and striking figure, his attitude and his action in speaking carefully studied, he was fitted to make a great impression on a popular assembly.

Mr. Windham, on the Report upon the Address, said: "Notwithstanding some lofty talk which we heard of dignity and firmness, and which I shall be glad to see realized, and a happy quotation expressive of the same sentiments from my right hon. friend (Mr. Pitt) not now present, the real amount of what was said seems to be little more than this: that France has, to be sure, the *power* of destroying us, but that we hope she will not have the *inclination;* that we are under the paw of the lion, but that he may happen not to be hungry, and, instead of making a meal of us, may turn round in his den and go to sleep. This is not stated in so many words; but it will be difficult to show that it is not the fair result of the argument." After exhibiting at length the enormous sacrifices we had made on the bases apparently of the *status quo* for England and the *uti possidetis* for France, Mr. Windham summed up: "Such is the grand and comprehensive circle to which the new Roman Empire may be soon expected to spread now that peace has removed all obstacles and opened to her a safe and easy passage into the three remaining quarters of the globe." Mr. Windham then adverted to the favourite topic of consolation and of hope: "This is the idea that, from some cause or other, from some combination of passions and events, such as no philosophy

can explain and no history probably furnish an example of, the progress of the Revolution will stop where it is; and that Bonaparte, like another Pyrrhus, or, rather, like that adviser of Pyrrhus whose advice was not taken, instead of proceeding to the conquest of new worlds, will be willing to sit down, contented in the enjoyment of those which he has already.

"Sir, the great objection to this hope, to say nothing of its baseness, is its utter extravagance. On what possible ground do we believe this? Is it in the general nature of ambition? Is it in the nature of French ambition? Does it happen commonly to those, whether nations or individuals, who are seized with a spirit of aggrandizement and acquisition, that they are inclined rather to count what they possess than to look forward to what yet remains to be acquired? If we examine the French Revolution, and trace it directly to its causes, we shall find that the scheme of universal empire was from the beginning that which was looked to as the real consummation of its labours; the object first in view, though last to be accomplished; the *primum mobile* that originally set it in motion and has since guided and governed all its movements."*

However erroneous this estimate of the French Revolution, it must be allowed that Mr. Windham judged the character of Napoleon better than either Pitt or Fox. The young Octavius aspired to the conquest of Europe, and was uneasy till he could attempt to realize his ambitious hopes. Like Swedish Charles, of him it might be said:

"'A frame of adamant, a soul of fire,
No dangers fright him, and no labours tire;
O'er love, o'er fear, extends his wide domain,
Unconquer'd lord of pleasure and of pain;
. . . . .
. . . . .

* "Parliamentary History," vol. xxxvi. p. 103.

Behold surrounding kings their powers combine,
And one capitulate, and one resign;
Peace courts his hand, but spreads her charms in vain;
'Think nothing gained,' he cries, 'till nought remain;
On Moscow's walls let Gallic standards fly,
And all be mine beneath the Polar sky.'"

Such was the history of Europe from 1801 to 1814. It is possible, had Pitt been at the helm, that respect for his abilities and a sense of his vigilant precaution might have kept in check the mighty conqueror. It is possible also that, had Fox presided over the Foreign Affairs of this country during the peace of Amiens, relations founded on mutual esteem might have sprung up between France and England, and grown into a lasting friendship. But Mr. Addington, too weak to inspire respect, too much imbued with prejudice to cultivate frankly the confidence of a great man and a great nation, could neither avert war by firmness, nor consolidate peace by mastery over the passions of Parliament and the people. When the peace was discussed in the House of Lords, Lord Grenville deprecated its terms and distrusted its duration in the same spirit which Mr. Windham had evinced in the House of Commons; but he was sharply called to task by the Duke of Bedford, whose speech is thus reported:

"The Duke of Bedford said that the preliminaries should have his support. With regard to the war which Ministers had just put an end to, the noble lord who had arraigned the preliminaries in terms of such severity might recollect that it was owing to the ill conduct of it that an inadequate peace was now made. It could not be forgotten that he and his colleagues had uniformly been humbled by every turn of ill-fortune, and elevated beyond bounds by the return of success. In the one situation, they had conde-

scended to hold the most abject language, and, in the other, they had assumed a tone of arrogance and insult. If it were not at the expense of the country, what a triumph might not he and his friends feel at the fulfilment of their predictions, that a war so misconducted would surely end in an unequal and disgraceful peace! It was painful to him to allude to matters so often discussed, nor would he have done so had he not been compelled to it by the speech of the noble lord, who appeared to consider his own *project* in 1797 so highly preferable to the present preliminaries, without at all taking into his consideration the expense of the war for the last four years, and the victories the French Republic had obtained on the Continent within that period, which, notwithstanding the extraordinary success of our arms, had placed the French Republic, if possible, in a higher situation than that in which it stood in 1797. He did no more than act consistently with the language he had held for years in declaring his thorough approbation of the peace, unequal as it was, and disgraceful as it might be. He entertained a lively hope, from what he had heard from the noble Secretary of State, that the King's present servants would conduct themselves on principles of more equanimity and less violence than their predecessors; that they would not be forward to show humiliation and abjectness to the strong, and pride and disdain to the weak. He returned them his thanks for having made the peace, and he trusted that they would follow it up by a full restoration of the Constitution to the people, and an immediate repeal of those statutes which had originated in childish alarm and unfounded apprehension of dangers that never existed but in the minds of his Majesty's late Ministers."

Thus unsatisfactory was the peace, thus uncertain was the

prospect of its continuance. It could only be justified by reflecting on the fatal errors of Pitt and his colleagues during the war; it could only be maintained by a degree of wisdom, temper, and self-respect which Mr. Addington and his colleagues were far from possessing.

CHAPTER LXI.

DEATH OF THE DUKE OF BEDFORD.

On the 2nd of March, 1802, the Duke of Bedford died. The immediate cause of his death was a rupture. The calmness and clearness with which he dictated his last dispositions, while suffering the most dreadful agonies, was stated by Dr. Ker, of Northampton, to surpass anything he had ever witnessed. The Duke of Bedford had been, during the revolutionary war, a steady supporter of Fox. Having been invited, before its commencement, to a meeting at Burlington House, where the Duke of Portland had assembled some of the chiefs of the Whig party, he asked, before the business commenced, whether Fox was expected. Upon being told he was not expected, the Duke of Bedford said: "Then I am sure I have no business here;" and taking up his hat, left the house.

His conduct in subscribing 100,000*l.* towards the expenses of a war of which he disapproved, caused great surprise to the Ministers. But it was perfectly consistent to support the exertions of his country against a foreign enemy while he deprecated the policy which made those exertions necessary; nor is there any part of his parliamentary career, excepting only his remarks on Mr. Burke's pension, which, in my opinion, gives his relations and his country any cause for

regret. He attributed to the support given to the American patriots by Louis XVI. much of the impulse which hurried on the Revolution;* and he rightly, in my opinion, condemned the war. On all other points, Fox's speech is his best eulogium.

Fox's speech, indeed, is not in his usual style, nor in the style in which he most shone—that of argument and contention; but it is nevertheless a splendid example of oratory, and would have made a reputation for any other speaker in Parliament. It is remarkable, also, for this circumstance: that it is the only speech Fox ever wrote out for the press, or even corrected.

On the 29th of July, 1802, Fox set out for France. The party consisted of Mr. and Mrs. Fox, the Honorable St. Andrew St. John (afterwards Lord St. John), and Mr. Trotter, a young Irishman, already mentioned, who had been attracted by the fame of Fox. After sleeping one night at Lord Thanet's, the party embarked at Dover, and landing at Calais, slept at Quilliac's Hotel, and proceeded the next day by St. Omer's and Cassel to Lisle.

At Calais, Arthur O'Connor dined with Fox. At Lisle, a public dinner was given to him, and peace between the two nations was enthusiastically toasted. Fox and his party then passed through Ghent and Antwerp, admiring as they went along the richness of the country and the comfort of the houses. Mr. Trotter was reading at this time the eighth and ninth books of the "Æneid," and Fox was delighted

* "When France took part with the United States of America, to weaken the power of Great Britain, the King was prevailed with to issue a proclamation, in which he stated in substance that the people in British America were not in possession of that degree of freedom which all mankind were entitled to by nature. Weak man! to suppose his own subjects would not apply the sentiment to themselves!"—"Diary of G. Rose," vol. i. p. 41.

to hear the passages relating to Pallas and Evander read out to him by his young companion. Every picture which appealed to the affections and the domestic feelings had a charm for a statesman whose heart was neither hardened by political conflict nor corrupted by the pursuits and passions of the world. The prayer of Evander that he might see his son again, and that, if that fortune was not reserved for him, he might die at once, appeared to him beyond measure beautiful and pathetic:

"Si visurus eum vivo, et venturus in unum;
Vitam oro: patiar quemvis durare laborem.
Sin aliquem infandum casum, Fortuna, minaris;
Nunc ô, nunc liceat crudelem abrumpere vitam,
Dum curæ ambiguæ, dum spes incerta futuri,
Dum te, care puer, mea sera et sola voluptas,
Complexu teneo: gravior ne nuntius aures
Vulneret."

So likewise, in the Ninth Book, he dwelt on the grief of the mother of Euryalus:

"Hunc ego te, Euryale, aspicio? tune illa senectæ
Sera meæ requies potuisti linquere solam,
Crudelis? nec te sub tanta pericula missum,
Affari extremum miseræ data copia matri?
Heu, terrâ ignotâ, canibus data præda Latinis
Alitibusque jaces! nec te tua funera mater
Produxi, pressive oculos, aut vulnera lavi,
Veste tegens;"

The episode of Nisus and Euryalus was one of the passages of Virgil which he most admired. "The tenderness of Mr. Fox's heart," says Mr. Trotter, "manifested itself by his always dwelling, in poetry, with peculiar pleasure upon domestic and affecting traits of character, when happily pourtrayed by the author."

* "Memoirs," p. 123.

Upon visiting the Hague, he was much shocked at a picture of the massacre of the De Witts—an historical event which had given him the saddest impression. "It was quite distressing to him," says Mr. Trotter, "to speak upon the catastrophe of the De Witts. His countenance was full of horror at sight of the memorable picture, and the soul of the sorrowing patriot spoke melancholy things in his countenance at the moment. There was, in truth, nothing more remarkable in this great man than an extreme tenderness of nature, which powerfully impelled him to abhor and to avoid everything cruel and sanguinary; whilst there was also a decision and grandeur of mind in him prompting the boldest resolves and most instantaneous modes of action."*

The journey and the reading of the "Æneid" were now resumed. He repeated more than once—

"Pallas, Evander, in ipsis
Omnia sunt oculis," &c. &c.

Or—

"Tum sic pauca refert: Ut te, fortissime Teucrûm,
Accipio agnoscoque libens!" &c. &c.

Fox observed, with truth, that there was a tincture of melancholy in Virgil which shows itself in all his works.

The eleventh and twelfth books were finished by the time that the party arrived at Brussels. Barras, the ex-director, was living at Brussels, but Fox showed no curiosity to see him.

On the 17th, the little party left Brussels, and with the help of Tom Jones and Ariosto, contrived to pass the time during the slow and tedious journey to Paris.

One of the great attractions of Paris to Fox was the

* "Memoirs," p. 91.

Théâtre Français, and he went to see "Andromaque" and "Phédre" with great delight.

Mademoiselle Duchesnois was then the chief tragic actress on the French stage. Her face was not handsome nor the expression of her countenance very striking, but her voice was one of the most touching ever heard; and when, in "Phédre" she says to the nurse, "C'est toi qui l'as nommé," the effect was extraordinary. Fox considered the "Phédre" of Racine in many respects an improvement upon Euripides, and was very far indeed from undervaluing the great masterpieces of Corneille, Racine, and Voltaire.

Fox had an exquisite taste for painting no less than for poetry, and he took great delight in seeing the Gallery of the Louvre, where the First Consul had collected from Italy, by right of conquest, the greatest modern works of sculpture and of painting. The St. Peter the Martyr, by Titian, the St. Jerome of Dominichino, the Transfiguration of Raphael, the Descent from the Cross and Crucifixion of Rubens, were among the pictures which most attracted the attention and admiration of Fox. "With the St. Jerome of Dominichino," says Mr. Trotter, "Mr. Fox was never wearied. It was the object of the museum which most fixed him. Often has Mr. Fox stood admiring this noble production; often and often has he returned to view it."*

On the usual day of the week fixed for the reception of foreigners by the Consuls, Fox attended the Levée. It is asserted by Mr. Trotter that when the name was pronounced by the English Minister, the First Consul showed considerable emotion, and, addressing the statesman before him, said: 'Ah, Monsieur Fox, I have heard with pleasure of your

* "Memoirs," p. 212.

arrival. I have much wished to see you. I have long admired in you the orator and friend of his country, who, in constantly raising his voice for peace, consulted his country's best interests—those of Europe and of mankind. The two great nations of Europe require peace; they have nothing to fear; they ought to understand and appreciate each other. In you, Monsieur Fox, I see with much satisfaction that great statesman who recommended peace because there was no just object of war—who saw Europe desolated to no purpose, and who struggled for its relief."*

Fox, who disliked compliments, and was always embarrassed by praise addressed to himself, said little or nothing in reply.

A week later, according to the custom of the Consular Court, Fox dined with Napoleon, and a good deal of conversation passed between them, especially on the subject of the Concordat.†

Fox's chief occupation at Paris was making researches in the Archives, for the purposes of his "History of the Revolution of 1688." With this object, he read and copied most industriously, for several hours a day, the correspondence of Barillon. Mr. Trotter says: "On the fourth day after his arrival in Paris, he commenced his labours; the worthy and respectable Lord St. John, Mr. Adair, lately Ambassador at Constantinople, closely attaching himself to Mr. Fox, and disposed to foreign and diplomatic researches, and myself, accompanied and regularly attended Mr. Fox to the French Archives every day, from eleven till three."

"He read and transcribed himself with alacrity and good

* Trotter: "Memoirs," p. 266.

† Lord Holland's "Foreign Reminiscences."

humour, and exacted no trouble from others in which he did not himself fully participate."*

His society at Paris consisted chiefly of the persons whom he had known in former days. One day he was visited by Koskiusko, with whom he sympathized on the fall of Poland.

Fox also paid a visit in the country to La Fayette, the honest and sincere, though not always the judicious, champion of liberty, both in France and America. M. de La Fayette's family consisted of his wife, his son and daughter-in-law, and two daughters. They lived in the most retired manner, La Fayette having at this time withdrawn from all political pursuits, and devoted himself to agriculture and the pleasures of the country.

The chateau of La Grange was old and spacious, the family of La Fayette happy in their simple mode of life.

The following letters were, at various times, written by Fox to Mr. Trotter:

"DEAR SIR,—I received by Tuesday's coach your pamphlet upon the Union, and your verses, for which Mrs. F. particularly desires me to thank you. We both like them very much. I think you put your objections to the Union entirely upon the right grounds; whether there is spirit in Ireland to act up to your principles, is another question. I do not know whether you ever heard that it is a common observation that Irish orators are generally too figurative in their language for the English taste. Perhaps I think parts of your pamphlet no exception to this observation; but this is a fault easily mended.

"As to Italian, I am sure, from what you have said, that you are quite far advanced enough to make a master an unnecessary trouble and expense; and therefore it is no excuse

* "Memoirs," pp. 220 and 222.

for your not coming, especially as it is a study in which I can give you, with pleasure, any assistance you could wish. In German, the case is, to be sure, quite different, as I do not know a word of it, nor have any German books; of Italian, you know we have plenty.

"I am sure I need not tell you that whenever you do come, you will be welcome.

"Yours ever,

"C. J. Fox.

"St. Anne's Hill, Thursday."

"I know of no better, nor, indeed, scarce of any other life of Cicero, than Middleton's. He is certainly very partial to him, but, upon the whole, I think Cicero was a good man. The salutary effect of the burning of his houses, which you mention, is, indeed, too evident. I do not think quite so ill of his poem upon Cæsar as you do, because I presume he only flattered him upon the points where he really deserved praise. And as to his flatteries of him after he was Dictator, in his speeches for Ligarius and Marcellus, I not only excuse, but justify, and even commend them, as they were employed for the best purposes, in favour of old friends, both to himself and to the Republic. Nay, I think that his manner of recommending to Cæsar (in the pro Marcello) the restoration of the Republic is even bold and spirited. After all, he certainly was a man to be warped from what was right either by fear or vanity; but his faults seem so clearly to have been infirmities, rather than bad principles or bad passions, that I cannot but like him, and, in a great measure, esteem him, too. The openness with which, in his private letters, he confesses himself to be ashamed of part of his conduct, has been taken great advantage of by detractors, as an aggravation, whereas I think it a great extenuation of his faults. I ought

to caution you against trusting to the translations in Middleton; they are all vile, and many of them unfaithful.

"If your sister does not understand Latin, you should translate them for her yourself. I do assure you, my dear sir, it always gives Mrs. F. and me great pleasure to hear from you, and especially when it is to inform us that you are well and happy.

"Yours ever,

"C. J. F."

"My dear Sir,—I am quite scandalized at having so long delayed answering your letters, but I put it off, as I am apt to do everything, from day to day, till Christmas; and on that day, Mrs. F. was taken very seriously ill with a fever, and sore throat of the inflammatory kind. The violence of the disorder was over this day se'nnight; but though she has been mending ever since, she is still weak. However, she may now be called, comparatively speaking, quite well; and I did not like to write till I could tell you that she was so. I hope that you go on with your Greek, and long to know whether you are as fond of the 'Odyssey' as I am, as also what progress you have made in the other poets. The Plutarchus whom you ask after is, I believe, the same Plutarch who wrote the lives, and who certainly was of Chæronea. At least, I never heard of any other author of that name, and he wrote many philosophical works.

"I am very truly,

"My dear Sir, yours ever,

"C. J. Fox.

"My dear Sir,—You made Mrs. F. and me very happy by letting us know you had had so pleasant a tour, and that

your sister and yourself were so well after your fatigues; though we both think your walks, on some days, must have been too long. I am not sorry that Mrs. F., who is very busy to-day, has commissioned me to answer your letter for her, as it gives me an opportunity of mentioning something to you which I have had in my head some time. We are, as you know, going abroad soon, chiefly on account of some State papers which are at Paris, and which it is necessary for me, with a view to my history, to inspect carefully; but we also think of taking in our way a tour through Flanders to Spa. It has sometimes occurred to me that this would not be a bad opportunity for you to gratify a curiosity, which you can scarcely be without, of seeing something on the Continent, and Paris particularly. We have a place in our carriage, and of course you would be our guest when at Spa, Paris, &c. I am sure it will be an additional motive with you to know that, besides the pleasure of your company, your assistance in examining and extracting from the papers at Paris would be materially useful to me; but I would by no means have this consideration weigh with you, unless the plan is otherwise suitable and agreeable to you. I cannot yet determine our precise time of setting out, as it depends upon some business not altogether in my own power; but, I should think, not sooner than the 15th nor later than the 30th of next month, and I hope to be back about Michaelmas. I need not say that, if you do think of coming with us, with respect to a week or two, we should adapt our time to yours; only it is so great an object with me to be at home very early in October, if not in September, that I cannot put off our departure long. If I hear anything within these few days (which is not unlikely) which may make me more able to fix what time will be most convenient to me, I will

let you know without waiting for your answer. I think you were in great luck to have had fine weather on your journeys, for we have had a great deal of bad here, though not very lately. You never told me how you liked the last half of the 'Odyssey;' I think the simplicity of all the part with the swineherd, &c., is delightful, though some persons account it too low. Did you observe in one passage that the suitors have exactly the *Scotch second-sight?*

"Yours ever,

"C. J. Fox.

"St. Anne's Hill, Thursday.
"(Post Mark, July 5th, 1802)."

"MY DEAR SIR,—I received yesterday your letter of the 28th, which seems to have been a good while upon the road. We are very happy at the thoughts of your accompanying us, and I make no doubt that we shall have a pleasant tour. Do not by any means hurry yourself, as I think the 18th or 19th of the month will be the earliest day on which we possibly can set out; but I will write again on Tuesday (the day of my election) from London, by which time I may be able to tell you something more certain, and at any rate you will not be too late by waiting for that letter. Mrs. F. desires to be kindly remembered.

"Yours ever,

"C. J. Fox.

"St. Anne's Hill, 4th July."

"MY DEAR SIR,—I had intended to write yesterday, thinking I should have no opposition here, and that of course I coul tell you, with some certainty, the day of our setting out; but there is an opposition, which, though foolish and contemptible to the last degree, may occasion the poll to be protracted, which leaves me in great uncertainty. At all events, the 21st is

the earliest day I can think of, even upon the supposition that this business is over this week. If it lasts, our journey cannot take place till the 29th or 30th. However, I will write to you again to-morrow or next day. Write a line directed to St. Anne's Hill; or set out, and make up your mind to the chance of being kept some days in this vile place at St. Anne's. I know you would not mind it.

"Yours ever,

"C. J. Fox.

"Shakespeare Tavern, Covent Garden, 7th July."

"Numbers { Fox . . 504
Gardner . 401
Graham . 193"

Mr. Trotter having left Paris before Fox and his party, the following letters were addressed to him:

"Paris, October 27th.

"My dear Sir,—Mrs. Fox has had two letters from you—one from Dover, which was longer coming than any letter ever was, and one from Chester—and desires me to thank you for her, though she has no excuse that I know of, except idleness, for not doing so herself. She has had another bad cold, with rheumatism, but is, thank God, nearly well. We do not wonder at your finding the difference between French and English manners in casual acquaintance very great, and I doubt much whether we have great superiority in more intimate connections to compensate our inferiority in this respect. You remember, no doubt, Cowper's character of us in the 'Task;' it is excellent.

"I do not think we have seen anything worth mentioning since you went, or, rather, since Mrs. F. wrote to you after

her presentation; only we were one day at Raincy, formerly the Duke of Orleans's, which, though in a state of neglect, is still very beautiful. We have seen Madame Duchesnois again, in Roxane, in Bajazet, and either the part suited her better than the others, or she is very much improved. My work is finished, and we stay now only in expectation of my brother, who writes word that he will be here the 2nd of November. We shall, of course, stay some days with him, and set out, I think, the 7th.

"I have made visits to your friends, the consuls, and dined with Le Brun. He seems heavy; but if he is the author, as they say he is, of the Chancellor Maupéou's addresses to the Parliament at the end of Louis XV.'s reign, it must be his situation that has stupified him, for they are very good indeed. As you had a curiosity about an overturn, it is very well it was satisfied at so cheap a rate. We shall be very glad to hear that your mode of travelling has been attended with no worse consequences. I suppose you will now go in earnest to *law*. I do not know much of the matter, but I suspect that a regular attendance (and with attention) to the courts, is still more important than any reading whatever. You, of course, read Blackstone over and over again; and if so, pray tell me whether you agree with me in thinking his style of English the very best among our modern writers — always easy and intelligible, far more correct than Hume, and less studied and made-up than Robertson. I hope soon to hear you are got safe to Dublin. Direct your next to St. Anne's Hill, where we hope to be by the 13th of next month. I find the baronet and Grattan are both in England, so I have no message to send to your country. We have just begun the Roman comique, and have already found the original of several of Fielding's

bloody noses, &c., which made you so angry. We are just going to pay a visit to the Museum.

"Your affectionate friends,

"C. J. Fox,

"E. Fox.

"Hotel de Richelieu, 28th October."

"My dear Sir,—I heard yesterday, for the first time, a report that you had been very unwell; pray lose no time in writing me a line, either to contradict the report or to say that you are recovered. I know you will excuse my having been so long without writing, on the score of the constant business which I had in London, and which you know me enough to know is not very agreeable to my nature.

"I have now been here a little more than three weeks, and hope soon to get again to my Greek and my History, but hitherto have had too many visitors to have much leisure. I have read 'Iphigenia in Aulis,' since I last wrote, and think much more highly of it than I did on the first reading. The scene where the quarrel and reconciliation between the brothers is has always been blamed, on account of the too quick change of mind in Menelaus; but I like it very much, and there is something in the manner of it that puts me in mind of Brutus and Cassius, in Shakespeare. We have had no very good weather; but this place has been in great beauty—greater, if possible, than ever.

"Is there any chance of your coming to England? If there is, you know we expect and insist that you come directly hither. I hope that, with the exception of a few occasional visits of two or three days, I shall be here with little interruption till the meeting of Parliament. Mrs. Fox desires me to say everything that is kind for her. She

says she has been too busy to write; and the truth is that the company we have had here has entirely taken up her time. Pray lose no time in writing.

"Yours ever affectionately,

"C. J. Fox.

"St. Anne's Hill, Tuesday."

"P.S. I am sure it will give you pleasure to hear that Grattan's success in the H. of C. was complete, and acknowledged even by those who had entertained great hopes of his failure.

"I do not know what interest your relations have in the county of Down, nor what you have with them; but if their interest could be got in favour of Mr. Meade, I should be very happy. If you should hear how the election is going on, I should be obliged to you if you would mention it."

Fox left Paris on the 11th of November, 1802, and after visiting M. Charles Lameth on the road, reached his home, without passing through London, on the 19th of the same month.

The letters written by Fox, after his return from France, to his nephew, Lord Holland, show his mind to have been about equally divided between literature and politics:

"November 21st, 1802.

"MY DEAR YOUNG ONE,—After our engagement of regularity in our future correspondence, it has turned out that we were hardly ever so long before without writing to one another; but, besides that at Paris I really had no time, I waited in constant expectation of hearing something of your intended projects. Not a line of yours since you left Tours had reached Paris when I left it on the 11th of this month, and though Mrs. F. had a letter from Bor-

deaux and Adair one from Toulouse, from Lady Holland, there was not in either any information of your intentions, whether for Spain or for Italy. I now begin on your birth-day, and mean to write every fortnight or three weeks at least. We left Paris on the 11th, and went to Charles Lameth's, where we stayed only one night. It is an excellent house, and a very pretty situation, and he is arranging the place upon a largish scale *à l'Anglaise*. How far he will succeed remains to be seen; the lying of the ground certainly favours his plan. We got to Calais the 14th, crossed the 15th, in the night—a good passage—and got home on the 17th without going through London. I have certainly seldom spent time pleasanter than at Paris, but yet I never in my life felt such delight in returning home. '*Hic amor, hæc patria est*;' mind, I mean the *hic* and the *hæc* in a very confined sense. Indeed, I have little or nothing to tell you of my life in Paris. The sight of Lafayette and his family, and the perfect attachment of them all to him, and of him to them, was very charming. The only new acquaintance I made worth mentioning were Livingston—who, though deaf, is far the most agreeable American I ever conversed with, besides being a very well-informed and sensible man—and Berthier, with whom, from shooting together, I became very intimate. I like him very much, and if I had not been too ignorant concerning the campaigns to know the proper questions to ask, I might be sufficiently informed to write a history of them. He seems to like being questioned, and answers with the greatest frankness and readiness. I ought, perhaps, too, to mention Villoison, the great Grecian, if it is only for his volubility, which exceeds all belief. Graham, the judge here, and even every Frenchman you have ever heard, are slow in comparison of him; and what is remarkable is, that notwith-

standing his speed, he speaks very distinctly. It is well he knows a great deal, for at the rate he goes a moderate stock would run out in half an hour. I do not reckon Lord Henry Petty, because I have been speaking of foreigners only, but never did I see a young man I liked half so much. Whatever disappointments Lansdowne may have had in public life, and of a still more sensible kind in Lord Wycombe, he must be very unreasonable if he does not consider them all compensated in Lord Henry. We met Lord Whitworth near Amiens, and I believe, as well as I hope, that there will be peace; but, by all accounts, the nonsense that has been talked in this country exceeds even past times—not that I believe the wish for war is at all general, but all the newspapers uniting in a cry for it has the appearance of public opinion, an appearance only, I am satisfied. I shall go to town for the Address on Tuesday—not with any hope of dissuading the warlike, but for the chance of being of some use in encouraging those who are said to be pacific, especially the Ministers. I am told I shall be as much abused for pacific language now as I was ten years ago; but as I am in Parliament, I must not blink such a question. With all the noise there is, it is difficult for those who most wish war to find a pretence for it. To make use of Switzerland for that purpose is not only a base hypocrisy, but one which nobody will or can believe, for not only Poland, &c., prove that such are not the causes of war with us, but it is evident to all men that we have no means of protecting the Swiss, or even assisting them in the smallest degree, in the present state of things. I do not yet know what to make of this cursed plot of Despard and his associates to seduce soldiers, &c. I hear the Ministry mean to do what is right, and send the persons accused to immediate trial. I hope, and, indeed, I believe, that the in-

tention of assassination which is imputed to these criminals is not founded. It is one of the points in our national character on which we may with justice pride ourselves that assassination is not one of the crimes which it occurs to Englishmen to commit in almost any circumstances. I believe the first commitments upon this business took place Wednesday or Thursday, and nothing is now publicly known further than what I have mentioned. The numbers said to be concerned are, as usual, stated very differently, but I believe, besides Despard, there are thirty or thereabouts apprehended. Pray let me know as soon as you have determined whether or not you are likely to go to Madrid. Don Pedro de Ronquillo's correspondence with this Court from 1685 to 1688, both inclusive, would be most valuable to me, and if the copying of it would not cost more than £100, I would willingly be at the expense. But if you or anybody I could trust were to read it, and direct what extracts should be made, a great proportion both of trouble and expense might be saved. I saw Mdlle. Duchesnois again in Phèdre, just before I left Paris, and thought her a good deal improved, though still unequal. I saw her also in Roxane in 'Bajazet,' which I think by far her best part. I saw La Fond once or twice, and like him better than Talma. In 'Tancrède,' I really think him very good, especially in the good part of Tancrède, which is the third act, and perhaps that act only."

"St. Anne's Hill, December 19th, 1802.

"As to myself, my studies of all kinds have been much interrupted, as you will have guessed from newspapers, by politics, '*iterum mergor civilibus undis*;' but it shall be for a very short time, I swear; only, while there is hope of contributing to prevent war, I feel myself in a manner bound.

I mentioned in my last how I was threatened in case I spoke warmly for peace, and if those threats were not realized, it was not for want of inclination in the warriors. 'Apologist of France,' 'agent of the First Consul,' 'no dislike of the power of France,' were dealt about pretty well both in newspapers and in the House; but they would not do, for the real wish for peace is such (and, indeed, I had always some hope that it would be so, notwithstanding the clamour), that I was popular both in and out of doors to the last degree, and in the House particularly, if I am any judge. I do not think, for many years, certainly, not since the Russian business, I ever had the House so much with me while I was speaking. To say, as those inclined to flatter me will say, that I have done anything considerable for peace, is more than is true; but it is true that, by speaking a pacific language more decisively than others dared to do, and by that language being well received, I have been the means of showing that the real sentiments of people are strongly for peace; and it is very important that this should be known. By letter, of course, I should not touch upon any more secret parts of politics, even if I had, which I have not, anything material to communicate to you. Pitt is generally believed to be friendly to Addington and for peace; but yet the warriors are continually calling for him to return; and therefore, I think, he will find himself obliged after Christmas to say something pretty decisive, or to make his retirement (for a time, at least) a complete secession. Canning and his clique, as well as the Grenvilles, keep no terms with the Ministry; and what terms they can keep with Pitt, if he supports Ministers handsomely, remains to be seen. Sheridan made a very foolish speech, if a speech full of wit can be with propriety so called, upon the Army Estimates, of which all

who wish him ill are as fond as I, who wish him well, am vexed at it. He will, however, I do not doubt, be still right in the end. In the House of Lords, you will easily conceive that Lord Grenville—I mean in point of debate only, however—is very powerful, and I think there never was a time when your absence was so unlucky, for there seems to be nothing on the peace side but the Chancellor. So much for politics, only I may add that rise of stocks and all other public circumstances look as one would wish them for peace. If I have my fears, it is only from a suspicion of a want of courage in Ministers to speak what they really think, and if they should *long* continue to be afraid to speak bold pacific language, ill humours may arise, and war begin without any real wish for it in either Government. I have begun my work again, but have had very little time for it. For idle moments, I am chiefly reading the old favourites, Euripides and Spenser, and admire more every day, especially the former. I repeat what, I believe, I once said to you before: that if a man's object is public speaking, Euripides ought to be his constant study scarcely less than Homer himself. Apropos to the latter, what do you think is meant by the *chain* in the Eighth Book of the 'Iliad?' Clark quotes Plato, for its meaning the sun, and Pope translates the two words σειρὴν χρυσείην—

> "'Our golden everlasting chain,
> Whose strong embrace holds heaven, and earth, and main.'

Pope has, too, I believe, a note upon it and its meaning. Now, my opinion is that nothing is meant but the literal sense of the words—not *our* golden chain, or *my*, &c., or even the &c.; for there is no article, but simply Jupiter, stating his superior strength, says, Try; take a golden chain, and hang it so and so, and pull, and I'll show you what I'll

do. Pray tell me your opinion. I am particularly anxious to defend mine, because I think it one of Homer's peculiar qualities that he is able to produce the sublime to at least as high a degree as any other poet, without ever resorting to the mysterious, the obscure, or unintelligible, and merely by images and thoughts which human senses and common human understandings are capable of examining and comprehending. By the way, you should tell me, as I do you, what books you are reading, with a little criticism, if it is ever so little."

"Yours affectionately,

"C. J. F."

"St. Anne's Hill, January 1st, 1803.

"I am convinced the Ministers mean peace, and while they do so, and that question continues in agitation, they ought to be supported. The conduct of France in the Swiss business is no doubt very disgusting, but there is no remedy. As to more or less decency with respect to the points which they take up, it is what the war party are no wise solicitous about, but yet, I think, they have thought other points fitter for their management than that of Switzerland. Upon the arrangement of the German Indemnities they lay most stress, which, I dare say, you think as I do of no consequence whatever. Indeed, I think Bonaparte quite in the right in that affair. I do not wonder the *Morning Post* frightened you. When I left Paris, everybody there was frightened, and even here such a consent of newspapers made some impression; but I have every day more and more reason to think the wish for peace is warm and general, only there is some pleasure to many people to hear the Consul well *railed* at. You know, the English are what is called a high-spirited people. I should indeed be glad if Lord Henry were to

make a figure, and, indeed, I have but little doubt that he will; only my political career, which I hope will not last more than a few weeks or months at most, may be over before that happens. There have been two young speakers, Kinnaird, and Lord Cowper's brother—by what I hear, the latter the most promising. I have seen Roscoe's pamphlet, and a poor one it is, insipid to the last degree, but well intended. I hope you will succeed in your embassy from him, and I promise myself great pleasure in reading Leo X. I am only afraid he will not praise Ariosto enough. We have had people here lately, and I have neither written nor read, except a little Homer and Euripides at chance moments. I see Cowper translates σειρὴν χρυσείην the chain, but leaves the question in doubt, only quotes in a note a supposition of its being a chain of love—quite nonsense, which he seems inclined to approve.

Everybody seems to think that peace is more and more safe; but yet what you say of ambiguous menaces, which is applicable to both sides, bad blood, &c., is very true, and till a language more friendly is adopted on both sides, there can be no safety. This is what I will work at as well as I can.

"Petitions, when men are persuaded that the Ministers are already pacific, would not, in your judgment or mine, be improper; but—what is more to the purpose—they would be impracticable.

"There is a report in the papers, I hope a false one, that Bonaparte is to be Emperor of the Gauls. I am not one of those who think names signify nothing."

"St. Anne's Hill, January 24th, 1803.

"My birthday (54).

"I write, my dear young one, because my three weeks are up, though I have no letter from you, and nothing new to

tell you from this country. The same wishes for peace continue (I believe) on both sides of the water, and the same perseverance in language most calculated to bring on war. However, I say as Pallas in Homer, A. v. 210; and surely she was wise: .

"'Αλλ' ἄγε λῆγ' ἔριδος, μηδὲ ξίφος ἕλκεο χειρί·
'Αλλ' ἤτοι ἔπεσιν μὲν ὀνείδισον, ὡς ἔσεται περ.'*

and I am sure we might say, in answer to the Consul, as Hector does, T, v. 432:

σάφα οἶδα καὶ αὐτὸς
'Ημὲν κερτομίας ἠδ' αἴσυλα μυθήσασθαι.†

Those who are for war might quote Æneas's speech, in the same book of the 'Iliad,' from v. 244 to the end; and, indeed, we peaceable men might quote them properly enough, if it were not for the conclusion, *let us fight.* Pitt has been in town, and it is *said* Addington is satisfied with him; but it is *said*, too, that he returns to Bath. This is difficult to reconcile. Dundas, whom they have just made a peer, says he shall stay away, as he cannot support, and does not like to oppose, Ministers. Since Parliament, parties, Ministers, and oppositions have existed, was there ever anything like all this? And if with all this, together with their own unaccountable conduct, the Ministry can stand (and I have no doubt but it can, and will), what is, or, rather, what is not, the power of the crown?

"Knight agrees with me that there is no allegory in the golden chain; but he does not go the whole length—that the

* "The force of keen reproaches let him feel,
But sheathe obedient thy revenging steel."—POPE.

† "Hector, undaunted, thus: 'Such words employ
To one that dreads thee, some unwarlike boy.'
Such we could give, defying and defied;
Shun intercourse of obloquy and pride!"—POPE.

meaning is take a chain—and he supposes there was such a piece of furniture lying about in Olympus. I feel, on the other hand, quite sure I am right. You are pretty fellows; take a chain and let us try, is the true translation. 'I do not know whether I had looked at Cowper's 'Homer' when I wrote last; I have not had it long, and what little I have read I cannot approve. We have read the first volume of Madame de Stäel's 'Delphine.' It is heavy, but mends as you go on. I thought, at one time, I should have given it up. I have been reading (not a new favourite, you will say) the fourth 'Æneid,' and marking every passage I do not like in it. Pray, if ever the fancy should take you to do the same, make memorandums of it, that I may see whether we hit upon the same passages. I have also marked all that I know to be taken either from Homer, Apollonius, or others, and when all is told, it is incredible what a quantity of excellence, all original, remains. There are more little carelessnesses, or what we used to call *botches*, than many persons who have taken Virgil's character upon credit would imagine. Did he intend to make Æneas as odious as he appears in it? I suppose not, and yet it is incredibly well done, if we could suppose the affirmative; and I do not know whether the effect is not, upon the whole, better than if we could either have admired or pitied him. Dido has us all to herself."

CHAPTER LXII.

UNEASY PERIOD BETWEEN THE CONCLUSION AND THE RUPTURE OF THE PEACE OF AMIENS.—CORRESPONDENCE OF PITT AND LORD CHATHAM, FOX AND GREY.—THE KING'S MESSAGE.

THE period which elapsed between the signature of the Treaty of Amiens and the renewal of war was one of great uneasiness—full of doubts and fears, of mistrust scarcely concealed, and of preparations for war amid professions of peace.

Napoleon, it can hardly be questioned, had signed the treaty with sincerity, and meant at first to abide by it. But what he meant by the phrase of abiding by the treaty was not the meaning of Addington, or of Pitt, or of the British nation. He meant to be undisputed master of the Continent of Europe, to change the disposition of territories and the form of government of various countries at his pleasure, and to impose silence on all who might feel alarmed or indignant at the violence of his acts and the insolence of his language.

The Ministry, divided between their wishes to prolong the peace they had made and their fear of rousing national indignation, had no decided policy, and turned helplessly to Pitt to furnish them with ideas and prescribe a policy.

The oracle was not willing to give forth its responses. Like the sibyl in the Sixth Book of the "Æneid," he required compulsion before he would point out a way of safety to

those who submissively waited for his inspiration. In plain terms, at the beginning of 1803, Pitt refused to go to town, expressed dissatisfaction with Addington's finance, and even hinted opposition on that ground. But when pressed by his brother, Lord Chatham, who was himself one of the Cabinet, he wrote the two following remarkable letters :

"Walmer Castle, Sunday, February 27, 1803.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—The very interesting state of things you describe, and the wish you express to see me, would be more than sufficient to determine me immediately to come for a few days to town, if by doing so I could have the satisfaction of talking over the subject with you as fully as you wish, without exposing myself to being drawn into consultations with others, which I really do not think, under the circumstances, would be fit or desirable.

"The bent of my opinion, on a general view of the question before you, you may easily guess. It certainly bears strongly one way; and if I were under the necessity of forming a decision, and acting upon it, much as I feel the difficulties which in either event the country will have to encounter, I believe I should have but little hesitation in making the option. But the propriety of any line to be adopted is so blended with the consideration of the measures by which it is to be followed up, and with the modes of executing them, that I should feel it much more difficult to judge what it would be prudent and right for others to determine, and I should be very sorry that any weight given to my opinion should influence a decision so important in its consequences to those who are to form it, and to the public.

"I can, however, have no scruple in stating to you, *in confidence, and for yourself only*, whatever occurs to me, if it

can give any satisfaction to your mind, or in the smallest degree assist you in forming your own judgment. I will, therefore, endeavour to write to you more at large to-morrow than I should have time to do now, having been prevented by different interruptions from beginning my letter till near the time of the post going out.

"Ever, my dear brother, &c.,

"W. PITT."

"Walmer Castle, February 28, 1803.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—I will now endeavour to state to you the chief considerations which present themselves to me on the important question now at issue. They are partly those on which I conceive Government has hitherto acted in its discussions on the subject of Malta, and partly those which are suggested by the recent proofs of Bonaparte's views in that quarter. It must, I think, have been generally felt that, after going as far as we did in concession in the preliminary and definitive treaties, we were peculiarly bound to insist on the full benefit of the articles contained in them, and that where they might be found not to admit of literal execution, we could not be expected to acquiesce in any new arrangement that was not at least equally advantageous to us. This principle was strengthened by all the subsequent conduct of Bonaparte since the peace, which was such as on former occasions would of itself have been thought fresh cause of actual war, and which at least justified and required additional jealousy and precaution in settling any point which might come into discussion; and the reasoning applied peculiarly to Malta, both as it was an object in so many ways important, and one with respect to which we had so much reason to suspect Bonaparte's designs. If the question

had rested here, and, under merely these circumstances, Bonaparte had brought forward his present demand for our evacuating it before any satisfactory arrangement was formed for its security, such a demand would have appeared even then sufficiently extravagant, and such as we could not comply with, either honourably or safely. The step would seem tantamount to an absolute surrender of the island into the hands of France, under an admission that the terms stipulated by the definitive treaty could not be executed, and after a fruitless attempt by a negotiation known to be depending for many months to obtain some new security.

"But humiliating and disgraceful as our situation would have been on this supposition, the case seems now to be still stronger. This demand is now brought forward under circumstances which no longer leave us to reason about the nature of Bonaparte's further intentions in the East, but after what I consider as a public and authentic account of his determination to avail himself of the first moment in his power to regain possession both of Egypt and the Venetian Islands. I, of course, refer to Sebastiani's report—a state-paper which never could have been published at all, much less in the *Moniteur*, nor ever have been left uncontradicted, if it were not both genuine and conformable to Bonaparte's plans, and if he did not (for some reason or other) wish to proclaim those plans beforehand to the world. To choose such a moment for urging his present demand appears to me only a proof of the height to which he already carries his insolence, and his hope of being able to dictate without resistance; and if he succeeds in this attempt, it is impossible to doubt that he will proceed to realize the designs which he has announced. We must therefore expect, if we now concede to him, to be obliged in a short time afterwards to

acquiesce in his seizure both of Egypt and the Seven Islands, and in all the dangers which would result from it; or we must then embark in the contest, having in the interval, with our eyes open, consented to abandon the best means of security for ourselves, and of annoyance to the enemy. On this view of the subject, I certainly can hardly avoid concluding that immediate and certain war would be a less evil than such disgraceful and dangerous concession.

"I do not, however, hold it as certain that war would be the necessary consequence. There may be still some chance that a vigorous and firm line adopted by Government, if aided by early and public declarations of full support from Parliament and the country, might enable us to carry our point without recurring to extremities. On this chance, however, I am by no means disposed to rely, though, in looking to possibilities, I do not put it wholly out of the question. In forming a decision, I should wish to consider the alternative as concession or immediate war. I have already stated the chief arguments which weigh with me against concession. For it, I conceive, little can be urged, but on a supposition of the impossibility, or, at least, the difficulty and uncertainty, of our being able now to meet the contest with adequate exertions, and the hope that, by yielding now, we may be better prepared for it before it becomes absolutely unavoidable. I confess myself that I could not rest much on the hope of our being comparatively better prepared, as, if we encourage the enemy by our acquiescence at present, I fear we shall be driven to fight for some vital interest, or, perhaps, for our independence, within a shorter interval than could enable us to gain in point of resources anything that would at all counterbalance the fresh advantages which will have been obtained by France.

"With respect, however, to our present means, I own that I feel great anxiety. After the large establishments of this year, and so many months for extraordinary preparation, I cannot help hoping that, in point of military and naval force, we should begin the war in more strength than we have done on any former occasion. The greatest object of my anxiety is our finance, on which everything must so much depend. I do not, however, after full reflection, doubt the sufficiency of the country to provide for the expenses of seven or ten years' war, without imposing burdens that would materially entrench on the comforts of the great body of the people, or ultimately affect our prosperity and credit. But I am convinced this can only be done by meeting at once the whole extent of our difficulties, and by raising within the year a still larger proportion of the supplies than was done even in the last four years of the late war. On this plan, I have no doubt that taxes may be found to answer all the purposes I have mentioned, and to prevent an accumulation of debt in the course of the war which must otherwise entail permanent burdens to an amount greater by many millions. But notwithstanding the clear ultimate advantage and economy of such a system, it certainly would require, in the first instance, an exertion which at first view would startle and alarm, and which cannot be effectually made without a *firm determination* on the part of Government, and without a real sense, both in the Parliament and in the public, of the necessity of making it. Besides the renewal of the Income Tax (which, I fear, is rendered more difficult than its first imposition), an addition of many millions to our permanent taxes in the very first year is essential to the success of any such plan as I refer to. The difficulty of such an undertaking I certainly most strongly feel. A determination on Addington's part to attempt it and

carry it through, I cannot help doubting after what I have observed in his measures of finance in the present year; and if any less efficient system is resorted to, I certainly see little chance of any advantageous or honourable issue out of the contest, unless any lucky accident, such as we have no right to count upon, should speedily terminate it in our favour.

"On the whole, you will see from what I have said that, if it is determined in the event of war to make the exertions that appear to be necessary, and it is thought practicable to carry them through, I should think war, with all its difficulties, preferable to acquiescence. On the other supposition, I hardly know how to choose between alternatives each so pregnant with the greatest mischief and danger. I have troubled you with a very long detail, which I know not whether you will find at all useful in considering this question, but I was unwilling to withhold anything which has occurred to my own mind as material. I must only repeat my request, for reasons I stated yesterday, that you will consider what I have said as for yourself only."

"Ever, my dear brother, &c.,

"W. P."*

It is impossible to believe that Lord Chatham kept these letters to himself. If he did not give or send them to Mr. Addington, he must have communicated fully the advice vouchsafed to a Minister so anxious to listen to wisdom, and to learn the sentiments of the great man of whom he was the feeble successor.

On the 2nd of March, Pitt wrote another letter to Lord Chatham expressing satisfaction that their opinions so nearly agreed, and recommending that no time should be lost in putting in readiness whatever means we possessed. These

* "Stanhope's Life of Pitt," vol. iv. p. 4, *et seq.*

letters show how much more carefully, both in a military and in a financial view, Pitt prepared for the war of 1803, than he had done for that of 1793.

Mr. Addington, thus inspired, began to make warlike preparations, and on being asked by Lord Malmesbury, whom he met on the 9th of March, whether the new course of vigour which the Government had adopted was approved by Pitt, he answered, without hesitation, that it was. In fact, it was impossible for Lord Chatham to communicate to Pitt the details of the despatches, and to receive his views in answer, without making those views known to his colleagues. Thus, we know that Pitt was the adviser, or, rather, author, of the peace of Amiens, and that he was also the adviser of the rupture of that peace.

Addington was now in high spirits. In this temper, he carried to the House of Commons a message from the King, announcing considerable military preparations in the ports of France and Holland, and declaring that he (the King) judged it expedient to adopt additional measures of precaution. Loyal assurances of support were agreed to next day in both Houses.

But there was a question of vast importance to which Addington, in his brave but unfounded confidence in his own capacity, had not sufficiently adverted. Englishmen began to ask themselves: If we are going to war with an enlarged and more powerful France, commanding the resources of Belgium, Holland, and Northern Italy, and against veteran troops led by the victor of Montenotte, Castiglione, Lodi, and Marengo—a chief of unquestioned and as yet unfathomed genius—have we a Minister at the head of our affairs equal to such a wrestling match, and likely to throw such an adversary?

The answer to this question was not far to seek. The Minister was a man of average understanding, equal to the requirements of quiet times, of respectable prejudices, and undoubted courage; but as Minister for a great emergency, he excited only ridicule and contempt. Little could he withstand the daily epigrams of Canning, and the scarcely more endurable compassion of Sheridan:

"As London is to Paddington
So is Pitt to Addington."

"When his speeches lag most vilely,
Cheer him, cheer him, Brother Hiley;
When his speeches vilely lag,
Cheer him, cheer him, Brother Bragge."

"The Pells for his son, the Pills for himself."

These and a thousand other arrows which wit squandered upon Addington utterly ruined him in public opinion, and he himself felt at length that, in a case of so much danger, another physician must be called in. But, with his usual imbecility and his usual self-sufficiency, he fancied that he might induce Pitt to accept a place of equal station and importance with himself, putting Lord Chatham at the head of the Government. Indeed, Lord Melville was induced to go to Walmer Castle to unfold to his old leader this precious scheme; but Pitt, with just scorn, would not even hear the proposition, and, in speaking of it afterwards to Wilberforce, said, with characteristic sarcasm: "Really, I had not the curiosity to ask what I was to be." Yet it would not have become Pitt, in this emergency of his country, to refuse an explanation of his views and intentions. In a conversation lasting during parts of two days, he expressed to Lord Melville his "sentiments with regard to the absolute necessity there is, in the conduct of the affairs of this country,

that there should be an avowed and real Minister possessing the chief weight in the Council, and the principal place in the confidence of the King. In that respect, there can be no rivality or division of power." Nor did Pitt disguise his opinion that the person generally called the First Minister must be himself. Thus were the cobwebs of Addington at once swept away. But worse remained behind.

Addington submitted to the restoration of Pitt as Prime Minister, and was content to serve under him as Secretary of State. He sent Mr. Long, one of Pitt's adherents, from Bromley to Walmer, to convey his capitulation. But other counsels were now heard at Walmer: as Mr. Long drove off from the door, he saw Lord Grenville driving up to it. Lord Grenville's advice to Pitt was fraught with that contempt for Addington which he had always felt and often expressed. He advised that Pitt should not parley with the Minister as to the formation of the future Government; that he should reply peremptorily, that when the King sent for him, and not before, he would develope his plans and name his colleagues. Thus much, he said, regarded Pitt's honour and character. When Pitt asked in his turn whether Lord Grenville and Lord Spencer would consent to be among those colleagues, he laid down two conditions—the first, that when Catholic Disabilities should be discussed in Parliament, he should be at liberty to express fully his opinion in favour of their removal; the second, that he should not be pledged in any way to refrain from expressing his opinion, not offensively, but unequivocally, on the events of the last two years. There was a third condition still more galling to Addington—namely, that, although he would so far yield to the exigencies of the time as to consent to sit in the Cabinet with Addington and

Hawkesbury, he could not consent to their holding efficient offices in the State. If the one were to have the Privy Seal and the other the Duchy of Lancaster, he should consider their pretensions fully acknowledged. But he (Lord Grenville) should prefer a wider range, and was of opinion that the fourth party in Parliament, meaning evidently that of Fox, ought, in the perilous circumstances of the time, to be included in a comprehensive administration.

He did not think that Fox would expect or require that he himself should be included, but he thought that Grey and Moira ought to have seats in the Cabinet, and Tierney a subordinate office.

Pitt was not pleased, apparently, with the reference to the fourth party; but in a conversation with Addington, he insisted—(1.) that he should have a direct message from the King; (2.) that in forming a new Ministry, he should be at liberty to consult with Lord Grenville and Lord Spencer; (3.) that Mr. Addington should accept some place of dignity, such as the Speakership of the House of Lords.

There could hardly be a doubt as to the fate of these proposals. The Cabinet, on being consulted, at once rejected them. Addington, for his own part, declared with proper spirit that he would rather retire from office altogether than accept the Speakership of the House of Lords. In this determination, he was no doubt right; to have accepted such an office of dignified inutility would have been a virtual and ntelligible condemnation of his whole administration. Thus the negotiation ended, and ended not only in failure, but in a great abatement of cordiality between the late and actual Prime Minister. "At the beginning of the year," says Lord Stanhope, "Pitt had always subscribed himself to Addington 'Yours affectionately.' From Bromley Hill, it was

'Yours sincerely;' from Wycombe Abbey, it grew to 'Dear Sir, your faithful and obedient servant.' In his replies, Addington always acted *Regis ad exemplar*—that is, exactly conformed in this respect to the varying precedents of Pitt."*

Fox's letters during the year 1802 give a picture of a statesman so fond of peace that he would not believe that either Bonaparte or Addington wished for war, and still less that this country had any just cause of war.

In the month of November, 1802, he wrote to Mr. Grey saying that if Pitt joined Grenville, or absented himself, or wished to take a line between war and peace, "but which may be calculated to bring on war, then Addington may be really in want of your support, then the support given him may be in every view both useful and honourable." He even promised on his own part, in such a case, something like regular attendance—but only something like. Grey, however, judged quite differently of the state of affairs.

In reply to a letter of Fox, in which he had expressed an opinion that Napoleon wished to preserve peace, Grey wrote in December, 1802: "I confess that everything I have learnt from those sources of public information which alone are open to me, both during the negotiation and since the conclusion of peace, seems to me to evince a disposition in the First Consul very unfavourable to such an opinion. I do not mean to contend that by any of those open and undisguised acts of ambition by which he has annexed new dominions to France either the letter of the Treaty of Amiens is violated or that the power of that country is in fact extended. Italy, and Switzerland, and Germany, too, were all left at his mercy. But there may be a way of using power so threatening and so insulting, as, at last, even under the most disadvan-

* "Life of Pitt," vol. iv. p. 36.

tageous circumstances, to force resistance; and he appears to me determined to make us drink the cup of our disgrace to the very dregs, to omit no opportunity of studied aggravation and insult, and to push us point by point, till at last we shall be compelled to take some measure which may give him a pretext for the hostilities which he meditates." With regard to the opinion that nothing done by Bonaparte hitherto would give us just cause of war, he said: "I think Switzerland would." But he added that he did not think "all or any of them came so near us as to make war necessary."

These observations appear to me perfectly just, and they made such an impression upon Fox as to induce him to modify his opinions. In answer to Grey's letter, he says:

"With regard to the Consul, I am very obstinate in my opinion that he meant nothing insulting to England, either in the German or Swiss business. The impertinent paragraph in the *Moniteur* was of a subsequent date to those transactions, and was the consequence of anger either at our actual or at our intended interference—an anger, by the way, not unmixed with real surprise, which, however impertinent it may be, is rather in favour of my opinion that nothing was intended irritating to this country.

"Perhaps I should go as far as you in considering the Swiss business a *just* cause of war; but, on the other hand, I am sure you will agree with me that, in this instance, it would have been nothing but a base and hypocritical *pretence* which would not have imposed upon one man of sense in Europe; and that the war, even if successful in general, would terminate in our having Malta, or the Cape, or Cochin, or in anything rather than Swiss liberty or independence. When I said I thought Bonaparte right in the German business, I meant as to manner as well as matter, and that so important a party

to the treaty as France was had a right to insist upon its being executed in some reasonable time. But, right or wrong, he could not conceive England interested in the business, as you cannot but remember with what pertinacity both Pitt and the Ministers maintained that they had nothing to do with that treaty in any view, and that it was best that they should not. My notion about Bonaparte's politics is this: that when I first went to Paris, he was foolishly sore about our newspapers, but not ill-disposed to the Ministers, and still less to the country. At this time, he was out of humour with Austria, and determined, as I suspect, not to give way a tittle to her. Afterwards, when he suspected (whether tru y or falsely) that we should interfere, he began to be terribly afraid of a war which might in France be imputed to his rashness. In consequence of this fear, he did make concessions by no means inconsiderable to Austria, and immediately felt bitter against us, who were the cause of his making them. But as that bitterness (according to my hypothesis) arises principally from the fear he has of our driving him into an unpopular war, I do not think it will for the present prevent peace; nor, if pacific counsels and language are used here, that it is at all likely to be lasting. You may depend upon it that commerce, and especially colonial commerce, is now the principal object, and upon those subjects they have a stupid admiration of our systems of the worst kind—slave trade, prohibitions, protecting duties, &c., &c., &c. However, bad as their systems may be, France must in some degree recover her commerce, and the more she does, the more will she be afraid of war with England. 'But what signifies France? Bonaparte can do what pleases *him*, without consulting the nation.' This is not true in any country beyond a certain extent, and I feel morally certain

that Bonaparte and all his friends are of opinion that war with England is the only event that can put his power in peril. An army is a most powerful instrument of government; but that it is not in all cases one upon which dependence can be had, is proved by the history of every country where very enormous armies are maintained; and out of the army he cannot expect the approbation of any one individual if he engages in any war with us to which he is not actually driven. Whatever ridicule may be attempted to be thrown upon the title of pacificator, you may be sure that whatever hold he has (perhaps no great matter, neither) upon the *people* of France, arises from the opinion that he alone could make the peace, and that he will be the best able to maintain it. Now, after I have said all this, I admit the justness of your apprehensions that the hostile language and *attitudes* (if one must use the new-fangled word) of the two nations may produce war even against the wishes of the two Governments; and to lessen that danger, as far as I shall at present meddle in politics, shall be my aim."*

Yet, in spite of Fox's predilections for the First Consul, it is impossible to believe that the publication of the report of Colonel Sebastiani, the insertion in the Annual Statement that England could not stand alone against France, and the advice, or, rather, command, to Switzerland not to make any treaty with England, can have been other than premeditated insults directed personally by the First Consul for the purpose of provoking England to war.

In March, 1803, Fox writes thus to Grey:

"DEAR GREY,—I have just received yours of the 15th, and think, if you set out on Thursday, as you propose, you

* "Correspondence," vol. iii. p. 379.

will be time enough. I am happy to think that (excepting in what relates personally to yourself) we are perfectly agreed in everything. Where you suppose there is a shade of difference, there is, in fact, none: for what I meant was, not a support of Addington's Ministry (which must depend on further circumstances), but a support of Addington's *accommodation* with France, if he should make one; and the case, I suppose, in which such support would, in my judgment, be so very becoming to us, and, in some degree, useful to the public, is that of a smart opposition being made, not to him in *general*, but to the particular *convention* or *act* by which these impending discussions shall be terminated, and in consequence of which the armament shall cease. You think this would not be the plan of the Grenvilles, &c., and if it is not, I agree with all you say. Whether or not it will be their mode of attack, I know not. When I wrote last, I thought it certainly would, and that the prospect of being joined by Sheridan, Moira, Canning, &c., would determine them for that mode. From some little conversation I had yesterday with T. Grenville, as well as from general observation, I begin to doubt it. But probably their determination will be influenced by events not yet known, and at any rate it is not in our power to direct it. All this is in case of peace, and I think you do not differ even about the degree of propriety there would be in supporting an accommodation. It is material that the well-wishers to peace, in the public at large, should have some authority beyond that of the Ministers to support and confirm them in their opinions. In the event, too, of future opposition, it is surely of importance that a great body of those who form it should have the reputation of being friends to peace. In the other, and, as I still think, far more likely event, I see we equally agree, as far as my

judgment can be formed at present. If one is to attend, it would certainly be a great relief to one's mind to allow oneself to abuse Addington's pompous nonsense as it deserves. It really is, on all occasions, both trifling or serious, disgusting in point of taste to a degree almost intolerable. As to union of parties in case of war, it is very difficult indeed; but, if decidedly called for, not perhaps altogether impossible. In that case, however, I should feel myself obliged to entreat your reconsideration of what you seem to have determined in regard to yourself. I have not the smallest doubt (I almost wish I could have any) of the sincerity of your determination; only consider that the circumstances of this world are so variable that an irrevocable resolution is almost a synonymous term for a foolish one.* I have a strong opinion that, if there is a war, you are the only, literally the only, man capable of conducting it. I lay aside all personal prejudices, but I think it completely demonstrated that Pitt, with all his great talents, is wholly unfit for it; indeed, he seems so conscious of it himself, that he leaves the whole management, in such cases, to others. Lord Melville, who, by the way, is now talked of, besides being now old, seems to be the worst hand that ever was employed. Lord Grenville is an able man, but not, I think, for such a purpose; and Lauderdale, with all his incredible activity, would be less fit for such a task than any other. However, all this speculation is in case of events the chances against which are about ten thousand to one—not against war, but against our having any choice about the conductors of it. As to war or no war,

* "In questo mondo mutabile e leggiero
Costanza é spesso il variar pensiero."—TASSO.

This sentiment of Tasso has some resemblance to Fox's maxim regarding an irrevocable resolution.

the stocks rose yesterday and the day before, which, as far as it goes, is a good sign; but my hopes are very faint. . . .

"You will see that we shall go to war, and be in the wrong in the opinion of all Europe."*

About an hour after this letter was written, the King's message respecting the armaments of France was delivered. Addington had secured the support of Pitt, and cared nothing for the opinion of Fox, or any one else.

* "Correspondence," vol. iii. p. 404.

CHAPTER LXIII.

RENEWAL OF THE WAR WITH FRANCE.—GREAT DEBATE.—1803.

On the 8th of March, Mr. Addington brought down a message from the Crown to the House of Commons intimating that warlike preparations were making in the ports of France and Holland, and asking the House "to enable his Majesty to adopt such measures as may be necessary to support the honour of his Crown and the essential interest of his people."

A suitable answer to this message was proposed the next day. It was supported both by Fox and Mr. Windham, but they both complained that all information was withheld. Mr. Sheridan and Mr. Canning likewise supported the address, and it was carried, *nemine contradicente.*

On a subsequent day, however, upon a vote for additional seamen, Fox signified to some extent his opinions upon the state of affairs. He said: "If Ministers have conceded too much, or done too little, for the support of the honour of the country, they have incurred a very grave responsibility; but let not this be laid to the charge of the Treaty of Amiens. If I am fond of that treaty, it is because it was the means of ridding us of incumbrances of the most oppressive kind. Not that it freed us from connection with allies (for allies we had none at the time it was concluded); but that it delivered

us from the detestable and abominable principles on which the late war was conducted. I do sincerely hope, sir, that we shall hear nothing more of wars undertaken for religion and social order. I speak not disrespectfully of religion, or of the blessings of social order; but I speak of that detestable hypocrisy which held forth these as the ostensible objects of contest, while we were all along fighting for ends of a nature totally opposite. I believe that such hypocrisy is for ever destroyed; and I trust that as long as a detestation of such base and infamous deception shall be reprobated among men, such attempts to impose on a generous people must be held in eternal execration. If, unfortunately, we are to be doomed to a renewal of hostilities, I hope that the object of the war will be clearly and distinctly understood."*

Again: "Nothing so much dispirits a people called upon to make great exertions as ignorance of the precise object of contest; and this ignorance was one of the leading causes of the evils which the late calamitous contest entailed on the country. After the experience of those calamities, no one would surely wish to go to war for a light object. On this point, I shall speak in very plain terms. If war be unavoidable for great national objects, then I am convinced it will be sustained with a corresponding national energy. But, at all events, let that object be fairly and fully defined; do not let us again involve the country in the same calamities which the want of a specific object has already made us so severely experience."†

Thus matters proceeded till the month of May, when the negotiation finally broke off.

On the 12th of May, Lord Whitworth left Paris; on the 16th, a warlike message from the Crown was sent to Parlia-

* "Parliamentary History," vol. xxxvi. p. 1183. † Ibid. p. 1184.

ment. Mr. Grey, in a letter of the following day, thus describes the scene: "You will see in the papers of to-day a melancholy confirmation of the news I sent you yesterday. We are now actually at war, and we can only say, God send us a safe deliverance, which under such Ministers can hardly be doped. Hawkesbury, in moving to have the King's Message taken into consideration on Monday next, was absolutely convulsed with fear, and could hardly articulate from the violence of his agitation, and so made the thing quite ridiculous Addington appeared in the full dress of the Windsor uniform, and strutted up the House in the midst of a burst of laughter just as the Speaker was reading the Medicine Bill a second time."*

It must have been on this occasion that Sheridan redoubled the laughter of the House by saying: "The right hon. gentleman who has appeared this evening in the character of a sheep in wolf's clothing," &c.

In fact, nothing could be more tragical than the occasion, nothing more comical than the chief actor in the tragedy.

On the 18th of May, war was declared, and on the 23rd and 24th occurred one of the most memorable debates which ever took place in the House of Commons. On the first night, Pitt spoke, and on the second, Fox, and both exerted their highest powers. Of Pitt's speech, Lord Malmesbury says: "Pitt's speech last night was the finest he ever made. Never was any speech so cheered, or so incessantly and loudly applauded." But the best account we have of this speech is from a letter of Lord Dudley, then Mr. Ward, to the Rev. E. Copleston (afterwards Bishop of Llandaff): "Whatever may have been its comparative merits, its effects were astonishing, and, I believe, unequalled. When he came

* "Life of Grey," p. 70.

in, which he did not till after Lord Hawkesbury had been speaking nearly an hour, all the attention of the House was withdrawn for some moments from the orator and fixed on him; and as he walked up to his place, his name was repeated aloud by many persons, for want, I imagine, of some other way to express their feelings. Erskine and Whitbread were heard with impatience, and when at the end of a tedious hour and a half, he rose (twenty minutes to eight), there was first a violent and almost universal cry of: 'Mr. Pitt! Mr. Pitt!' He was then cheered before he had uttered a syllable—a mark of approbation which was repeated at almost all the brilliant passages and remarkable sentiments; and when he sat down (nine), there followed one of the longest, most eager, and most enthusiastic bursts of applause I ever heard in any place on any occasion. As far as I observed, however, it was confined to the parliamentary 'Hear him! Hear him!' but it is possible the exclamations in the body of the House might have hindered me from hearing the clapping of hands in the Gallery. This wonderful agitation, you will readily perceive, it would not be fair to ascribe wholly to the superiority of his eloquence *on that particular occasion.* He was applauded before he spoke, which is alone a sufficient proof. Much must be attributed to his return at such an awful moment to an assembly which he had been accustomed to rule, from which he had been long absent, and in which he had not left a successor; some little, perhaps, to his addressing a new parliament, in which there were many members by whom he had never or rarely been heard, and whose curiosity must of course have been raised to the highest pitch.

"His physical powers are, I am seriously concerned to remark, perceptibly impaired. He exhibits strong marks of

bad health. Though his voice has not lost any of its depth and harmony, his lungs seem to labour in those prodigious sentences he once thundered forth without effort, and which (to borrow a phrase from your favourite metaphysician, Monboddo) 'other men have neither the understanding to form nor the vigour to utter."*

Of the speech itself, Mr. Ward says:

"Of the object of your inquiry, Mr. Pitt's speech of the 23rd, I will not say *omne ignotum pro magnifico est*, yet I am perfectly convinced that the circumstance of its not being made public has increased the general disposition to do full justice to its merits. More, indeed, than full *justice* appears to me to have been done to them, at the expense, too, of the author, when it has been said, as it has, that this was the greatest, or among the greatest, of his harangues. No doubt it was perfect as far as it went—*i.e.*, as far as it was intended to go! 'Bonaparte absorbing the whole power of France;' 'Egypt consecrated by the heroic blood that had been shed upon it;' 'the *liquid fire* of Jacobinical principles desolating the world;' the merciless sarcasms on the unhappy Erskine, whose speech (remarkable for inextricable confusion both of thought and expression) 'was not, he presumed, designed for a complete and systematic view of the subject,' 'the scruples of whose conscience he was so desirous to dispel,' 'and whose important suffrage he would do so much to obtain;' and the whole of an electrifying peroration on the necessity and magnitude of our future exertions—all this was as fine as anything he ever uttered. Still, however, it is a sacrifice of memory and judgment to present impressions to pronounce it his *chef-d'œuvre*. It was not so comprehensive, or so various, or what those who, like me, would rather hear

* "Stanhope's Life of Pitt," vol. iv. p. 49.

him for four hours than one, must be allowed to take into the account, so long as some to which I have listened, and several at the excellence of which I have guessed through a report. For instance, that against peace in 1800, that for it the following year, that on the murder of the King of France, and that short but beautiful burst of eloquence with which he followed Sheridan (on the same side) on the occasion of the mutiny."*

Of any means of comparison between this and other speeches of Pitt we are, unfortunately, deprived. By some mistake of the Speaker's, strangers were shut out from the Gallery.

As this occasion was one of the deepest interest to England, to France, and to Europe, and as the course of events from 1803 to 1815 may be said to have flowed from the result of that debate, it is worth while to consider what were the chief arguments used by Pitt in favour of immediate war, and by Fox, not against war, but in favour of a pause before the country was finally committed to hostilities.

The complaints made of the conduct of France comprised—

1. The transaction concerning the German indemnities.
2. The violence offered to Switzerland.
3. The continuance of the French army in Holland.

These were quoted by Pitt as symptoms of that system of ambition and encroachment deliberately pursued by France towards other Powers.

Next, as immediately affecting ourselves, and bearing the character of insult as well as injury, were—

1. The demands respecting the liberty of the press, and the expulsion of French emigrants.

* "Stanhope's Life of Pitt," vol. iv. p. 48.

2. The mission of commercial agents, with the indignity which attended it.

3. The great point of all upon which the rupture of negotiations was based, was the evidence of an intention to invade and seize Egypt, as shown by the publication of Sebastiani's report, and the view of the present situation of the Republic, sent by Bonaparte to the Legislative body. To these two documents may be added the language held by the First Consul himself to Lord Whitworth.

Before adverting to the line of argument adopted by Fox on this occasion, it may be well to remark that the objections taken by him to the war of 1803 rested on a principle entirely different from that on which he had placed his objections to the war of 1793.

Fox considered the war of 1793 as a war undertaken in order to prescribe to the French nation what should be the form of their government, and to prevent the diffusion of republican and revolutionary opinions over Europe. In regard to the first object, he thought, with all the best authors on international law, that England had no right to prescribe to France what should be her form of government; and in regard to the second, he thought that, however mischievous might be the opinions prevailing in France, opinions could not be changed by force of arms.

But with respect to the war of 1803, Fox's objections were of a nature entirely different. He did not deny that the First Consul of France had conceived the project of governing all Europe, nor that he ought to be resisted in his attempts to carry out that design, but he thought it a blunder to fix a quarrel upon her entirely for English objects, and especially in a case in which we were not strictly justified.

These remarks may serve to explain the line of argument

adopted by Fox in his great speech of the 24th of May. "I hope," he said, "that I shall not be thought to take unnecessarily nice distinctions when I say that some acts may be done by one country against another which, although in the abstract highly unjust and injurious, are not, nevertheless, acts so directly tending to the injury of a third Power as to amount to a proof of hostile views against that third Power, and therefore to call for its interference; neither is it necessary, on the other hand, that you should be bound by specific treaty to guarantee any particular State against the aggrandizement of its neighbours, in order to be entitled to interfere for its defence. Undoubtedly you may interfere to oppose such aggrandizement upon the general principles of policy, which include prudence, and upon the first principle which guides States as well as individuals—the principle of self-defence. I go farther, and say you are authorized by the rank you hold, and I trust will continue to hold, in the scale of nations to interfere and to prevent injustice and oppression by a great towards a smaller State whenever it is offered. This I take to be a ground of just interference with foreign Powers, regulated always by the prospect of success, and by that prudence which would abstain from any interference at all when it could only injure the party it was intended to serve."

Having laid down these principles as his guides on the question before the House of Commons, and turning to the consideration of the Treaty of Amiens, he said: "The principle on which he had supported that treaty was not that the state of Europe, as arranged by its stipulations, was satisfactory, not that he had at the time at which it was made much reliance on the good faith, still less on the moderation, of France, but upon a feeling that, under all the circumstances, it was better to take the opportunity which

then offered itself to put an end to the calamities of war. It was true that we did accept an imperfect security on concluding the Treaty of Amiens."

He went on to show that perfect security in a treaty could not be hoped for; all that could be rationally expected was probable security. But he continued: "Did we therefore relinquish our right to interfere in the affairs of Holland? Certainly not; for independently of general principles, there are express provisions to the contrary in the treaty. Did we relinquish our right to interfere in the affairs of Switzerland? Certainly not. Or in the affairs of Naples? or of Turkey? or in those of any other part of the globe? Certainly not. That treaty precluded us in no instance from acting upon the system which became a great and generous nation, or from taking any reasonable opportunity that offered for succouring the distresses of others, and protecting the smaller States." Having thus cleared the ground in order to lay the foundations of his great argument, Fox proceeded to discuss the general conduct of France since the Treaty of Amiens as applied to German indemnities, to Piedmont, to Switzerland, and to Holland. In regard to the German indemnities, he condemned the conduct of France, but not more than that of all other governments engaged in the transaction. "He had himself always reprobated the system of indemnity and compensation. It was, and could be, no other than a system of common rapine. To take indemnities from the territories of other States by any other authority than that of the rightful possessors was, in one word, robbery."

With respect to Piedmont, it was at the time of the Treaty of Amiens a part of France; it belonged to France as effectually as Gibraltar belonged to us.

The question of Switzerland was one of a very different

nature. "The French Government were bound by treaty, as well as by every principle of justice, to withdraw their troops from Switzerland, to leave that country to itself, even with the miserable Government which they had established in it, and to respect its independence. During their dominion in that country, they had established a Constitution there utterly repugnant to the principles and opposed to the feelings of the people. The moment their troops were withdrawn, the people of Switzerland, by an insurrection founded on the truest principles of justice, rose and overturned that Constitution. The French Government interposed to restore it, and, bad as the system was, the manner of their interfering to restore it was, if possible, worse. . . . This violent act of injustice on the part of France no man contemplated with more indignation than he did. But what was there to do? Was it right to go to war about it? His answer would be, *primâ facie*, No! He would not say what circumstances might not have happened to justify our going to war; indeed he thought the acts of France against Switzerland would have been a sufficient justification for it if policy had permitted. . . . Under the then peculiarly unfavourable circumstances of Europe, he had a thorough conviction that we could not make such a war with any effect."

In short, Fox took on the subject of Switzerland nearly the same line which had been taken by Pitt.

In regard to the conduct of France towards Holland, Fox used stronger terms:

"It was one of those acts to which, the stronger the words in which it should be described, the more applicable they would be to its guilt. It was an act to be equalled by nothing but those which prevailed in countries where a difference of colour seemed to have shut up the hearts of men,

and extinguished every sentiment of compassion. Were I a master of the use of colours," he continued, "I would take the darkest to delineate the conduct of France towards Holland. It certainly has been worse treated by her than any other country whatever. Holland has not only suffered all the evils of war, which are considerable, but when peace came, to turn that country, in defiance of a positive treaty with her, into a depôt for French troops, for the mere purpose, I sincerely believe, of making the Dutch pay the expense of maintaining them, was an act no less despicable for its meanness than hateful for its atrocity."* It was his opinion that it was the duty of Ministers to have remonstrated against the occupation of Holland, and in doing so to have taken the highest ground:

"A direct and spirited remonstrance on the affairs of Holland specifically, immediately on the arrival of Lord Whitworth at Paris, ought to have been presented to the French Government. This representation should have been made, not privately, not couched in peevish language —such was always beneath the dignity of a great nation, and never could answer any good purpose—but an open, candid, manly remonstrance, in terms fit to be published in every part of the globe as the language of an independent and powerful people. He could not, indeed, undertake to answer positively for the success of such a measure. But it was his firm belief that, if Great Britain had only presented a remonstrance, and had done so without any menace of declaring war in case of refusal, such an endeavour would have had a favourable effect on the affairs of Holland in the general

* Lord Stanhope, in his account of Fox's speech, says it went "to palliate on many points the policy of the French Government." I confess I do not see much palliation in the language quoted above.

opinion of Europe, and on the subsequent conduct of France herself."

Fox likewise considered it as "a great reproach to this country not to have seized the very first moment of a good understanding with France to concert measures with her for the extirpation of that dreadful evil, that disgrace to human nature, the slave trade. This he should always lament as a valuable opportunity lost on a most interesting and important subject."

Passing from the head of injuries to that of insults, he said that no one who knew anything of the Constitution of England, or the spirit and temper of its people, could expect that we should condescend even to discuss a proposition with France which had for its object any diminution of the liberty of the press.

Proceeding next to the demand to send away certain refugees, Fox reprobated it in the strongest terms:

"To deny any man, be his condition in rank what it might, coming from whatever part of the globe, the rights of hospitality on account of his political principles, would be cruel, cowardly, and totally unworthy of the British character.

. . . . . .

"No man, I believe," he continued, "is more a lover of peace than I am. No one, perhaps—and I hope not to be suspected at this time of bearing hard upon an unfortunate and falling family, when I say it—no one, perhaps, politically speaking, has less respect than I have for the house of Bourbon; yet I am ready to declare that for that family—nay, for the worst prince of that family—I should be ready to draw my sword and go to war, rather than comply with a demand to withdraw from him the hospitality to which he had trusted."

He then adverted to a statement in the newspapers that

the First Consul had told the Swiss Deputies to beware of forming any connection with England.

"If this were true, he had no difficulty in saying that it ought to have been distinctly complained of, and explanation demanded of the French Government.

"Two other points remained to be considered—one, an expression in the *exposé* of the First Consul to the Legislative body of France, where it was alleged that 'England alone is not able to contend against France.' Either this expression ought to have been treated with silent contempt, or it ought to have been made the ground of an immediate demand for satisfaction. Another point was the report of Colonel Sebastiani, printed in the official *Moniteur*. In one part of this report, a charge was brought forward against General Stewart, very insulting and very galling to the feelings of a man, especially a soldier. But there was another and more serious charge—a charge against the King's Ministers of giving encouragement to assassination, which assuredly demanded from them the most prompt and vigorous remonstrance to the French Government."

So far, Fox seems to have accused Ministers of acting with too little vigour rather than too much. Such, in fact, had been their fault. By their silence when they should have spoken, and their weak language when they should have spoken strongly, they had encouraged rather than repressed the arrogance of the First Consul. It was the very way to bring on war. But when he came to Malta, Fox condemned altogether the refusal to give up that island. He desired the 10th Article of the Treaty of Amiens to be read. He pointed out that we had bound ourselves to surrender Malta to the Order of St. John when three contingencies should have occurred:

1. When a Grand Master should have been appointed.

2. When a garrison of Neapolitans should have arrived to take possession of the place.

3. When certain Powers should have been invited to guarantee its independence.

"These conditions have been fulfilled."

Ministers by their refusal to execute their engagements, exposed themselves to be involved in an argument which pressed them like the coils of a serpent. Nor did Fox satisfy himself with powerful logic. His fancy and his wit were in the highest style of eloquent illustration.

Of Pitt he said: "We have heard some splendid philippics on this subject—philippics which Demosthenes himself, were he among us, would have heard with pleasure, and possibly with envy."

Again: "The right honourable gentleman, when he appears before us in all the gorgeous attire of his eloquence, reminds me of a story which is told of a barbarous prince of Morocco, a Muley Moloch, who never put on his most splendid robes, or appeared in extraordinary pomp, but as a prelude to the massacre of many of his subjects. Now, when I behold splendour much more bright, when I perceive the labours of an elegant and accomplished mind, when I listen to words so choice, and contemplate all the charms of polished elocution, it is well enough for me, sitting in this House, to enjoy the scene, but it gives me most gloomy tidings to convey to my constituents in the lobby."

The First Consul had said, in his conversation with Lord Whitworth, that if he were forced to go to war, he should attempt the invasion of England, although he knew that the odds were a hundred to one that he and the greater part of his troops would go to the bottom of the sea. Great in-

dignation having been excited by this declaration, Fox said: "This anger put him in mind of his favourite poet, Dryden, who, in the most extravagant passage, in the most extravagant of his pieces, and in the mouth of Almanzor, puts a sentiment which appeared to him to out-soar every flight allowable to the wildest fictions of imagination. Almanzor is made to say to his rival:

> "'Thou shalt not wish her thine; thou shalt not dare
> To be so impudent as to despair.'"

In reference to a phrase of Pitt—that Egypt was a land consecrated by the blood of our soldiers and sailors, and, therefore, could not be relinquished to France—Fox said:

"What seas should we ever quit, or what territories should we ever surrender, if we were to retain all that had ever witnessed the triumphs of the British army?"

The whole weight of Fox's accusation against Ministers was thus finally summed up:

"What, then, is the result of all this? Why, that you suffered the opportunity to escape you, and, instead of interposing with a generous magnanimity for the protection of Holland—instead of looking to that country—which stood in immediate need of being rescued from the most grievous oppression, in whose favour you might have roused all the indignant sympathies of Europe, and in whose cause you might have hoped for the co-operation, more or less, of the different great Powers of the Continent—you rest the whole quarrel with France on a point of sheer naked British interest—on your possession and occupation of Malta—a point on which no other European State ever feels an interest or entertains a wish in common with yourselves. You have reduced the whole question to such an issue that,

except, possibly, the Turks, the value of whose alliance is easily appreciated, no other Power can be induced to come to your aid by the sense of a common interest. You have deprived yourselves of every advantage you would have had from the admiration and from the good-will of mankind, and you have sent your cause into the world stripped of every motive to union of other nations derived either from their interests or their virtues."

It is clear from this summing-up of his indictment that Fox did not so much oppose war against France as war on the sole ground of Malta, to be commenced by a breach of faith.

This extraordinary speech of Fox obtained the admiration it so justly deserved.

Mr. Abbott, the Speaker, says, in his journal:

"Mr. Fox spoke from ten o'clock till one, and in these three hours delivered a speech of more art, eloquence, wit, and mischief, than I ever remember to have heard from him."

If we omit the word "mischief," which is tinged with the party colour of Mr. Abbott, we have here a confession that in art, eloquence, and wit, Fox had surpassed himself.

Mr. Grey, who was a follower and admirer of Fox, completes the portrait. He describes Fox's speech as "the most wonderful display of wisdom and genius, before which everything else shrinks into dust."

Fox himself, in a letter to his nephew, describes the debate with his usual taste, simplicity, and good-humour:

"Pitt's speech on the Address was admired very much and very justly. I think it was the best he ever made in that style; and there were several circumstances that rendered it peculiarly popular with the House. . . .

"I dare say you have heard puffs enough of my speech upon the Address, so that I need not add my mite; but the truth is, it was my best."*

To my judgment, it appears that, as an argument against the course pursued by Addington, Fox's speech was unanswerable. But what was that argument? That Addington had taken the wrong line in his quarrel with France.

Fox never affirmed that the remonstrance he advised in regard to Holland—the remonstrance upon Sebastiani's report—the remonstrance upon the appointment of spies to inquire into the state of our harbours—would not have led to war. And in dealing with the plea that although one or two insulting notes would not justify war, a long course of insults would do so, Fox, instead of denying the force of the argument, turned round upon Addington, and said that in that case the Minister was not justified in saying the year before that there was no danger of war.

Thus Fox was, no doubt, entitled to say, in a letter to O'Brien: "Addington, by his folly, has contrived to lay bare the injustice of our cause."†

But if, passing from the folly of Addington and the conduct of the negotiation, we ask whether it was possible, in May, 1803, to preserve peace with France, I must own that, in my judgment, it was not. I fully believe that when the First Consul made peace, first with Austria, and afterwards with England, he was ready to try the experiment of a formidable France, governing Switzerland, Holland, and Italy, and at peace with the rest of Europe. He seems to have aimed at the glory of founding a powerful empire, whose strength should not be incompatible with the independence of England and Russia, and even of Germany.

* "Correspondence," vol. iii. p. 223. † Ibid. vol. iv. p. 9.

But the abuse of the English press, the ill-will of the English Government, and the suspicion of the German sovereigns, convinced him that his dream of a Napoleonic dynasty could only be realized, and his power could only be consolidated, by the destruction of British freedom and Continental independence. When this resolution was formed is not clear; but the insults heaped upon England, her statesmen, and her generals, appear to me to afford a convincing proof that Napoleon intended to engage England first, and after defeating her, to crush the nations of the Continent.

There was living at Paris at this time M. Gallois, a Frenchman of singularly calm and sober judgment, who was well acquainted with letters and with politics, who knew England and her institutions, who was a member of the Legislative body of France, and who in that character had, at the request of Napoleon, written an eulogium on the peace of Amiens in the shape of an official report. Upon the near approach of the rupture with England, the First Consul again sent for M. Gallois, and opening the whole case, asked him to write a fresh report, justifying the war. He first spoke of the profusion of libels published against him in England, and expressed his strong conviction that these libels spoke the sense of the English Ministry, who seemed to be bent on a renewal of hostilities.

M. Gallois, in reply, entreated the First Consul not to be moved by these scurrilous and mendacious publications. He reminded the ruler of France that the libels on Louis XIV. had perished, and had left no other trace than the remembrance of the irritation they had caused, and the weakness they had revealed in that powerful monarch. Coming more immediately to the point, he said he had known libels and caricatures on the Royal Family in

England which the Government were utterly unable to suppress. He could not think that the libels on the First Consul had received any encouragement from the English Government. The First Consul, on hearing these remarks, felt, perhaps, that his own recent and unsettled authority was not to be compared to the legitimate rule of Louis XIV. or to the title of the Royal Family of England, rooted at once in prescription and affection. But, whatever were his motives, he declared to his interlocutor that he felt his power shaken, and that he must seek his safety in a renewal of the war with England and with the Continent. "Mais vous avez des traités," interposed M. Gallois. "Oui—des traités imposés par la force, et acceptés par la peur," was the First Consul's fierce reply. He seemed to have heaped up in his mind every reason which might weigh in favour of a warlike resolution. "Le soldat s'use dans la vie civile," he gave as a motive for immediate war. He had likewise considered all the chances of war. "I cannot make France stronger," he said, "but I can weaken her enemies." I find in the "Reminiscences of Lord Holland" the relation of a conversation between the First Consul and M. Gallois, in which similar sentiments are expressed, and which, no doubt, was the same. I give this relation in Lord Holland's own words:

"He made the Treaty of Amiens as an experiment, and the scurrility of our newspapers, the coldness, jealousy, and obvious estrangement of our Cabinet, convinced him that the experiment had failed. He employed one of the best pens in France, M. Gallois, to draw up the report on the peace of Amiens, in which the articles were justified, and the advantages of the peace earnestly impressed on the Legislature. When Lord Whitworth left Paris on the rupture, Napoleon sent again for Gallois, and exclaimed: 'Eh bien!

l'Angleterre veut absolument la guerre. Elle la veut.' He then laid before M. Gallois the whole negotiation, and pressed him to give his opinion. 'England,' said Gallois, 'might have done more to preserve peace, but France has not done all she might to obtain it.' To that remark, the Chief Consul answered that he had already despatched another messenger to catch Lord Whitworth, and 'de faire cette dernière tentative.' But after vaunting and proving his efforts for peace, and after acknowledging that peace, or, at least, the utmost endeavours to preserve it, had been necessary for France, he added with emphasis, but with gaiety: 'Mais enfin, je vous dis, l'Angleterre veut la guerre. Elle l'aura, et quant à moi, j'en suis ravi.' Pressed to explain a feeling apparently so inconsistent with his professions, he entered into a long, curious, and luminous exposition of his policy. 'If,' said he, 'the Powers of Europe had been willing to let France and her new institutions subside into a tranquil and free government, if they could have borne *de bonne foi* to cultivate the relations of amity with her and her dependencies in Holland and Italy, she might have cherished the arts of peace, improved her internal condition, and sat down contented with the prospects of liberty and prosperity before her; but experience of peace for one year with England, and for more with the other Powers, has confirmed my apprehensions and proved it to be hopeless. They never meant France to be unmolested. But France, who would be hereafter unequal, is just now fully equal to contend with them all to advantage.' 'How so?' said Gallois. 'Will not some years of peace add to the resources of France? Will not the beneficial effects of those changes of which we have hitherto perceived little but the shock be gradually sensible in the increasing riches and power of this great people?'

"'Granted,' replied Bonaparte; 'but riches and prosperity for the purposes I am contemplating may not be altogether the instruments best adapted to the end: d'ailleurs, l'armée! les généraux!' He described the latter as at that moment flushed with success, inured to fatigue, with fortunes half made, in all the vigour of life and ardour of aspiring ambition. A few years' repose, during which they must be courted and enriched by the Government, would damp their ardour and impair their capacity for war, and yet leave them, their descendants, representatives, or favourites, with pretensions to influence and command, difficult and perhaps unjust to elude. In such a state, the country would be unequal to the sort of contest he was then contemplating; for the great Powers of the Continent must not merely be humbled—they must be broken, shattered, and dismembered. In their present condition, they had the will, and they would, after a short peace, have the power, to combine to wrest from France the fruits of her victories, and, possibly, to blast all her prospects by a counter-revolution. He then developed his whole system at great length and in detail. To Gallois it seemed vast and well combined—his views comprehensive, if not just, his arguments ingenious and striking, and his knowledge almost miraculous. He pursued the system he then described with little variation, till his marriage with the Archduchess of Austria."*

Supposing this conversation to be the same which M. Gallois related to me, I gather from the whole narrative that not very long after the signature of the definitive Treaty of Peace with England, Napoleon, urged by the impatience of his nature, by his consciousness of vast military superiority, and by a conviction that neither England nor the

* "Lord Holland's Reminiscences," pp. 230-4.

Continent meant to maintain peace a moment after their shattered strength should be restored, fully determined upon a renewal of hostilities. Endued, moreover, with consummate genius for war, he had the same delight in it that a skilful shot has in a day's shooting, a good chess-player in a game at chess. Upon my mentioning to him at Elba, where I had an audience of him at Christmas, 1814, that the Duke of Wellington had been so long engaged in war that he might find it difficult to take an interest in other pursuits, he replied quickly: "*Eh bien! c'est un grand jeu! belle occupation!*" Hence, if I am right in my conjecture, the insulting report of General Sebastiani; hence the peremptory demand for Malta; hence the effort rather to put England in the wrong, in appearance, than to pursue a pacific course in reality. According to M. Thiers, while his whole conduct tended to war, he was fully aware of the suspicion with which his policy was viewed, and was fond of repeating: "England must be put completely in the wrong."* To the same author (M. Thiers) we are indebted for the confession that, in spite of Napoleon's success in putting England in the wrong, the nations of the Continent, led by a sure instinct, sympathized with England and not with France. They knew too well where their danger lay to wish success to the mighty captain who had already shown his power, his skill, and his want of moderation.

The unhappy blunders of Mr. Addington left that Minister no choice between a violation of the plain and distinct engagement of the Treaty of Amiens, and the surrender to an encroaching and insolent Power of a fortress, which in case of war must prove to be one of the main bulwarks in the defensive system of Great Britain.

* "Il faut que l'Angleterre ait tous les torts."

Fox, in his speech on the peace of Amiens, had attached great importance to Minorca and Malta, unwisely surrendered in that treaty.

Pitt, with a want of foresight not uncommon to him, had not understood their value, and when he perceived it, there was no way of repairing the blunder but by war. Still, if George III., after concluding peace, would have accepted either Pitt or Fox as his Prime Minister, it is very possible that peace might have been maintained. Pitt would have inspired the respect, Fox would have acquired the confidence, of France.

CHAPTER LXIV.

MR. POTTER'S MOTION.—FOX AT ST. ANNE'S HILL.

NEXT, after the decision of the main question of peace and war, came a question brought on by Mr. Potter, of a vote of want of confidence in the Ministers, on the ground of their previous mismanagement. Fox wished to support this motion, but his party would not agree to do so. Pitt took the singularly ill-judged course of moving the order of the day. But the Ministers rightly argued that the Government in office, at the beginning of an arduous war, must either be supported or dismissed. To leave them in office and to put aside the question of confidence in their capacity, would have been unjust to the Government and fatal to the country. The House felt strongly the justice of this appeal. Accordingly, when Pitt's motion was put, there were for it 56, and against it 333. Fox and his friends then left the House, when there appeared for Colonel Potter's motion 34, against it 275.

The King expressed much pleasure at the result, "as these events prove the real sense of the House of Commons, and that Parliament means support to the executive power, not to faction." The only thing really proved was, that neither Fox nor Pitt was prepared to assert the constitutional doctrine, that in a great crisis great abilities were required.

Fox saw the evil, and deplored it. "It is indeed lamentable," he wrote to his nephew; "but the whole secret of the affair is in my old quotation—*Vuolsi così colà, dove si puote Ciò che si vuole.*"*† Fox soon after consoled himself by going into the country. In a letter of the 6th of June to his nephew, who had written to him from Granada, he says: "We are now here for good; and beautiful and delightful it is beyond measure. The nightingales have almost done; but the singing of the other birds, the verdure, the flowers, the lights and shades of this April-like weather, make the scene from this window such that I do not envy the orange trees, &c., of your Southern climates."‡

* "Correspondence," vol. iii. p. 221.

† The words of Virgil to Minos, in the Fifth Canto of Dante's "Inferno."

‡ "Correspondence," vol. iii. p. 224.

CHAPTER LXV.

STATE OF PARTIES.—DISSOLUTION OF MR. ADDINGTON'S MINISTRY.—PITT FORMS A MINISTRY ON A NARROW BASIS.

When, in 1757, the Duke of Newcastle attempted to carry on war against France, with Sir Thomas Robinson as leader of the House of Commons, Pitt said to Fox: "The Duke of Newcastle might as well send his jack-boot to lead us." In a short time, he and Fox so worried, laughed at, spoke at, and spoke down the Ministry, that after a brief trial of another chief, the Duke of Newcastle was compelled to take Pitt for his Secretary of State, and Fox for his Paymaster of the Forces. From this time, hardly a ripple of opposition checked the triumphant course of the vessel of the State till the period when George III. ascended the throne. Lord Grenville and his friends were anxious that Pitt and Fox should take the same course in 1803 which Pitt and Fox had taken in 1757, and there is good reason to believe that similar consequences would have followed.

The Addington of 1803 was no more fit to lead than the Robinson of 1759. But the Pitt of 1803 was a very different man from the Pitt of 1757, and the King of 1803 was a very different man from George II. who, in the first days of his reign, had given up the Minister of his predilection, and had been content to consult the welfare of his country and the spirit of the Constitution.

Lord Grenville and his brothers, Mr. Windham, Lord Fitzwilliam, and Lord Spencer, were anxious to form a junction with Fox based on two principles of action—the first that the Government which then existed was manifestly incapable of carrying on the public business in such a manner as the crisis required; and, secondly, that if the occasion should arise of forming a new Government, the wishes and endeavours of all who meant well to the country should be directed to the establishment of an Administration comprehending as large a proportion as possible of the weight, talents, and character to be found in public men of all descriptions, and without any exclusions. But Pitt would not listen to the first condition.

On the 10th of January, Lord Grenville having met Pitt in London, writes to Lord Buckingham: "I came here yesterday to meet the person to whom I wrote. . . . The same ideas prevail, and nearly the same course will be pursued: the most decided hatred and contempt of those who have done so much to provoke both; views of middle lines and managements and delicacies *où l'on se perd.*"*

Soon after this, Lord Grenville and his friends intimated to Fox, through Mr. Grenville, the brother of Lord Grenville, and the old friend of Fox, their wish to join with him in a systematic opposition to Mr. Addington.

Nothing could be more open than the conduct of Lord Grenville and Fox in this transaction. Equally clear, but singularly unwise, was the line taken by Pitt. He utterly refused any concert for the purpose of systematic opposition. He left Lord Grenville and his friends to pursue their own course. Presently the case became still more complicated by a serious illness of the King.

* "Courts and Cabinets, George III.," vol. iii. p. 34.

On the 19th of February, Pitt stated to Lord Malmesbury that, viewing the difficulties and dangers arising from a probability of invasion, the dangerous illness of the King, and the state of parties, he had given each of these dangers due and serious attention, had weighed them in his mind maturely and leisurely, in order that he might determine safely and calmly on such a line of conduct as became him, and which he might never be sorry for.

"That he would never make the turning out of the Administration the object of his endeavours; that though some of his best friends had united themselves avowedly for that purpose with Fox, yet he had rejected, and would uniformly reject, any overture which might be made to him to become a party to such a system.

"That in all simple and plain questions, it was his resolution to support Government; but when Government omitted anything he thought the state of the country required to be done, or did it weakly and inefficiently, he then should deliver his sentiments clearly and distinctly, but not even then in a spirit of opposition, since he would never do it till he had ascertained Government would persist in what he condemned, and not adopt what he thought essentially necessary."

But he added: "If Ministers should want to resign and give up their places, he should look upon it as right and a duty to contribute towards forming a new Administration by any means in his power, and this duty would be a paramount one if the King should call upon him for his services."*

In considering the course taken in a very difficult crisis of public affairs by three men so eminent as Fox, Pitt, and Lord Grenville, it is a satisfaction to be able to pronounce that there is no reason to attribute to any one of

* "Diary of Lord Malmesbury;" "Life of Pitt."

them any other motives than those which are consistent with the highest integrity and the purest patriotism. It is a just ground of national pride to reflect that, whatever may have been the errors of judgment, whatever the want of foresight, or the sway of prejudice in certain minds, no great political party in England was at this period of her history led by men undeserving of full confidence in their public spirit and personal integrity.

If, however, passing from questions of character, we consider the wisdom of certain maxims of conduct, it will be difficult to justify the political views of Pitt. The safe working of our political system depends on the opinion of the House of Commons, that the Ministers of the Crown deserve their confidence. To say that the Sovereign may appoint, by virtue of the prerogative, men wanting in ability or knowledge, and that the House of Commons, whatever may be the dangers of the country, is bound to support them, would be to strike at the root of our Constitution. Much, perhaps the greater part, of our national policy must be left to the direction of the executive Government. To permit that direction to remain in the hands of silly, foolish, and empty men would be a want of national wisdom. To call upon the Crown to place the public affairs under the guidance of men in whom the House of Commons can have confidence is the necessary privilege of that House; to allow a certain discretion to men who enjoy that confidence is a necessity of constitutional monarchy. But, in the opinion of Fox, Lord Grenville, and Pitt alike, Mr. Addington was incapable of conducting public affairs wisely and successfully. The offer of the Speakership of the House of Lords to Mr. Addington was a sufficient proof of Pitt's opinion on this head. In his conversation with Lord Grenville, he

showed openly his contempt of the men who governed. The dangers of the country were imminent. "In this awful situation," said Mr. Francis, "whether I advert to some who are present or to others who are absent, the melancholy and astonishing fact is that, from the Councils and Government of the country, at such a moment as this, all the eminent abilities of England are excluded. In fair weather, a moderate share of skill may be sufficient. In the storm that seems to be coming, other pilots should be provided."

The natural course seemed to be to propose a resolution that the existing Administration had not the confidence of the House of Commons.

This Pitt would not do. But what is strange is, that he seems to have thought that pointing out the omissions and rebuking the weakness of Ministers in their several departments, was a less interference with the prerogative of the Crown than carrying a vote of want of confidence; whereas the continual prompting, inquiring, stimulating, and suggesting to the several Ministers what they should do or leave undone, was not only a far less constitutional, but also a less efficient, and, at the same time, a more offensive, interference with the prerogative than that of insisting upon a change of Ministry, and then granting confidence where confidence was due.

Accordingly, this special doctrine of Pitt, professed and acted upon by him in 1803, and till May, 1804, has shared the fate of the special doctrine on the subject of dissolution held by Fox and Burke in 1784: it has been abandoned, and the opp site rule has prevailed. It is generally admitted that Ministers of the Crown must possess the confidence of the House of Commons.

Pitt himself, indeed, after a short trial, was obliged

to abandon as untenable the theory he had embraced. But before we proceed to the contests and the debates which led to the resignation of Mr. Addington, it will be well to listen to the language of Fox upon this state of affairs. The earliest notice I find in Fox's letters of the proposal of the Grenvilles is in a letter to his oldest and most intimate friend, Fitzpatrick. To him he says in a letter, on the 27th of January, 1804:

"I have a message by our old friend T. Grenville from his family and friends, stating their wish to co-operate with me (and friends, of course) in a systematic opposition, for the purpose of destroying the Doctor's * Administration, and of substituting in its place one upon the most comprehensive basis possible. The first object (first, in point of time) is to oppose the bill which Ministers are to bring in on the volunteer business, and to propose a general system of arming the people upon the principles I approve, reducing the militia to its old *quantum*, putting an end to bidding for substitutes, &c., with many details which I am to see. When I say this is the first in point of time, I ought to observe that so it appears to me, for *they* stated a doubt whether some inquiry relative to the 23rd of July, to be moved by some friends of ours, might not precede everything. I mention this to show that there is no point of precedence as to which wing should begin the attacks. But to return. Some inquiry into the management of foreign politics is also suggested, and more particularly if the war with Spain takes place, of which I much doubt. Ireland and the Catholics are left to my judgment. Upon their connection with Pitt, I understand them to be quite explicit; that it is over, and that his opinions are no further to be considered or looked to than in a pru-

* *i.e.*, Mr. Addington's.

dential view, with respect to the questions in which he might or not join us. P. and Lord G. have had full explanations. The same proposal was made to him as is now made to me. His answer was that the present Ministry are weak and inadequate to the crisis; that their dismission will be a benefit to the country; that in case of such an event, an Administration should be formed upon the broadest possible basis; that if his Majesty were on such an occasion to send for him, he should think it right to endeavour to comprehend in the arrangement all parties, and even those who had been most hostile to him (N.B.: this tallies exactly with what we heard before); that in many points he would support the new Opposition if it took place, but that he was *determined* not to engage either with Ministers or their opponents systematically. In short, he could not be what is called *in opposition*. He hinted, too, that these men might probably die of their own weakness—an opinion too absurd, I think, for him to entertain seriously. The truth seems to be that he cannot give up the hope of being in some way acceptable at Court; like Sancho, he cannot quite give up his hopes of the island, in which, however, he has no faith whatever."*

As to his answer, he says in this and a subsequent letter:

"My answer was, that I thought with them upon all the subjects discussed, and that I felt no repugnance to agree to the proposal—at least, in some degree—but that I must have some days before I could answer. Now, what is your advice? If Grey would come to town, to stay and engage heartily (of which if he would come, I have no doubt), perhaps it would be right to say *yes;* perhaps it is right even now. But the inconvenience is terrible, for to do the thing thoroughly without a stay in London is impossible; and then

* "Correspondence," vol. iv. p. 15.

expense, interruption to history, &c., &c, where, after all, there is no chance of success. It is very hard to encounter all this. Suppose I were to answer that I will give them all occasional help in my power, but that I cannot alter my plan of life so as to give a regular attendance in Parliament, and that I am afraid Grey can hardly be induced to come up. I must finish now, though I have omitted several circumstances, and among others a very important one—that our old friend sees the possibility, nay, the probability, that if we succeed in ousting the Doctor, P. may return to power, and after having proposed terms in vain to some of the opposition, may put himself at the head of the present Administration, or one like it; and this is admitted to be an objection to the plan. I do not feel this so much as he does, but many others will."

TO SAME.

"January 28th, 1804.

"I was interrupted in my letter yesterday, and have an opportunity of sending this to London; so I will add a little supplement, the most material part of which is to say, pray come as soon as you can. Mrs. F. says I should say nothing but *come, come, come,* and she would say it down on her knees. You know, she thinks there is no adviser but you. Pray, by return of post, say when you come exactly. I should have mentioned yesterday that our friend was very distinct as to the persons who were parties to the proposal—*i.e.*, all of his own name and family, Lord Spencer, Windham, &c. He had seen Carlisle, and he was much for it, and thought he could answer for Morpeth. Of Fitzwilliam, of course there could be no doubt. He knew nothing of Canning or Lord Granville,* but rather guessed that Lord Stafford would hang

* Lord Granville Leveson Gower, afterwards Earl Granville.

off with Pitt; of Lord Melville he knows no more than we do. He thinks that if Pitt offered to stay in without Catholic emancipation (and, by what I hear of Charles Long's pamphlet, that *if* is now a certainty), he concealed the circumstance from all his colleagues, except Dundas. I hear Cobbett asserts this positively. You and I, you know, always suspected some concealment; but such a circumstance as this, and concealed from Lord Grenville, too! *quel homme!* Adieu; write and come.

"Yours affectionately,

"C. J. Fox."

In a subsequent letter of the 24th of February, he says:

"I suppose the system of sliding, as you call it, into a junction, must be adopted, but you must recollect that one great advantage is lost by that method. I mean that it puts an end to that decisive *disconnection* with Pitt, which the other mode would nail. Besides, in cases where he joins them (as I suppose he will in the course of the Volunteer Bill), they will appear rather following him than us. But it cannot be helped; whatever prejudice Plumer and other good men may have, surely they must see that, in case of junction, we have so very decisively the lead in the House of Commons, that there can be no doubt upon that point."*

On the 25th of February, he says to the same correspondent: "I shall be in town on Monday, and at the House, though there will be probably nothing to do there. I hope I shall see Lord Grenville on Tuesday, and then I shall be able to tell my friends (pretty unreasonable friends they are) something of the matter. I have a letter from Whitbread, and it will probably be as he wishes; but do not you see that by

* "Correspondence," vol. iv. p. 22.

this mode the objection (which others lay more stress on than I do) of Pitt's taking advantage gains tenfold strength? He can in this case (if the King will let him) come in with just as many or as few of his old colleagues as he chooses, and they will have no motive to withhold them from following him. If a real junction had taken place, he must be driven to the alternative of coming in with the present men or not at all. That there should be some divisions and debates previous to any regular junction may be right, but if it does not take place no good can be done—'Nor if it does,' you may answer, and I cannot easily reply; but one likes to have done for the best."

When Fox saw Lord Grenville, he was much satisfied with him. "A very direct man," was his remark; and in Fox's mouth there could be no higher eulogy.

While Fitzpatrick was Fox's most intimate friend, Grey was the adviser upon whom he most relied for parliamentary aid. To him he wrote on the 29th of January, 1804: "I have had a direct communication (wholly unsought by me) from that part of the Opposition which sits at the bar end of the House to the following effect. That it is their wish to join with us in a systematic opposition for the purpose of removing the Ministry, and substituting one on the broadest possible basis. Stowe and all his appendages, Lord Spencer, and Windham, are the *proposers;* of Carlisle and others, they have no doubt; and Fitzwilliam, as you know, is eager for such a plan. There was an openness and appearance of cordiality in the manner of making the proposal that much pleases me. Upon the subject of Pitt there was no reserve; it was stated that he, for himself, peremptorily refused to enter into anything that could be called opposition, and that a full explanation had taken place

between Lord Grenville and him upon that point. The result of this explanation was, that all political connection was broken off, and that if the proposed plan took place, no consideration was to be had of Pitt or his opinions at all, except as far as, in a prudential view, one might sometimes shape a question for the purpose of availing ourselves of his support, as one would of any other individual. It was admitted, too, that Pitt's plan might be to let the Doctor fall, and then to avail himself of the merit of not having been in opposition, in order to make himself the most acceptable person to succeed him. It was admitted further that this was an objection to the plan; but it is one, I believe, which neither you nor I much regard. With respect to the Irish question, it would be left to my judgment; but a most important question will, it is said, come on immediately, in which, at any rate, we shall join. I mean the revision of the volunteer system, and, in general, of our military force. The Ministers, it is said, intend to bring in a *declaratory* bill to confirm the Attorney-General's opinion, and condemn Erskine's. This *I* do not believe; but they will certainly bring in some bill to assimilate volunteers more to regular forces, and thereby to increase the incredible burthen of them to the country. The new Opposition will, if we concur (and perhaps whether we do or not), bring forward a plan which appears to me to be a good one, but which I cannot detail on paper. The general drift is to follow in general Windham's ideas and mine in regard to arming *en masse*, to diminish the militia, to enlist regular soldiers for terms of years, to put an end to bidding for substitutes, &c., &c. My answer was that I must consult friends before I come to any determination, and particularly *you*. I own I lean very much to such a junction; but, then, what they say is true—that it is idle to

look for the full effect of it unless both you and I attend. The inconvenience of this to both of us is certainly very great, but is it not, perhaps, *right* to sacrifice our convenience?

"Pray think this well over, and answer me upon this as well as the other points of this letter. My only doubt is between the two following answers—first, a direct yes; second, that though I approve the plan, I do not see sufficient prospect of real good to make me give that sort of attention to public affairs which is inconsistent with my private comfort; but they will occasionally have my support, and especially in this volunteer business."*

Two further letters will elucidate Fox's opinions at this time.

On the 15th of February, 1804, he writes to Grey from Albemarle Street: "I received your second letter just as I was leaving St. Anne's yesterday. I am sorry Lauderdale's opinion is so strong as you describe it, though all I have done is telling them that I have every inclination to act with them; but I think it would be better to agree first in public, and so let the thing come on naturally, rather than by any compact. But it is useless to trouble you with more upon this matter at present, as a new scene arises. The King is as ill as in the worst moments of 1788. I think I *know* this, and the bulletin, indeed, does not deny it; '*much indisposed*' yesterday, and '*much the same*' to-day. Some are of opinion that his dissolution is certain and near, but though this is the general belief, I do not know that it is so well grounded as that of his derangement. If this had not been the case, I would have pressed you very much to come for Monday or Tuesday se'nnight, when a motion was to have been for a committee to consider of volunteers, army, militia, &c. The

* "Correspondence," vol. iii. p. 449.

nothingness of the present bill would have made this a very advantageous question; but *now* I suppose all attention to all questions will be suspended. You know that an inquiry into the 23rd of July is to be moved on Monday by Sir J. Wrottesley, a Pittite; yet I hear from good authority Pitt will not be there, though he is in town. Probably, however, this motion, with all others, will be postponed. It is curious to see how long these men, at such a time, a time, as they say, of impending invasion, will venture to go on without legal authority. The Doctor acquainted the Prince of the King's illness the day before yesterday, but did not state it, I believe, to be so bad as it then was, much less as it *now* is. In some shape we must have to act, and therefore if you *can* come, for God's sake do; only wait for to-morrow's post, when I may be able to tell you more, though I am not certain. I wish for Lauderdale almost as much as for you; but will he leave his book? Whitbread, I hear, made an excellent speech on Wednesday. I was kept at home by Mrs. Fox's being very ill indeed—not dangerously, indeed, after the first day, but in dreadful pain from a bilious attack; and I had neither heart nor composure to write to you or Lauderdale, or, indeed, to do anything, till Sunday, and then I thought I might as well put it off till I got there. Tell Lauderdale this if you see him, for his letter certainly required an answer. Make up your mind to be what you must be, if things take a turn that I think not improbable. I will give every assistance, but you must be at the head."*

On the 28th of March, he writes: "The division on Pitt's Motion, did, I own, surprise me—not so much on account of our numbers as of theirs; and it is a strong proof how far less than any former House the present is influenced by

* "Correspondence," vol. iii. p. 453.

debate, for it was decidedly in favour, if not of the question, at least of the Admiralty. Pitt's opening was vile, and even in his reply, though some of the declamatory parts of it were good, *did* very little. The Doctor gave out, and so did some of his friends for him, that he saw the combination against him was too strong, and that he should give up. I never believed him, and if what is reported is true—that he is offering Erskine to be Attorney-General, and forming other arrangements of the like nature—it seems out of the question. To propose to a man to come into an Administration who are just about to resign, would rather exceed even the Doctor's mode of proceeding. The decision of conduct which you wish will not, I think, take place with regard to Sheridan; with regard to Erskine and the Duke of Norfolk, it will. Sheridan was a good deal badgered at Parsloe, and looked in his most sheepish and down manner. What was his motive for attending there I know not, unless he had hopes of some support which failed him. Our meeting was small, but very good in point of zeal. Coke made a warm speech, which gave great satisfaction, and even those who did not quite stomach our junction, if such it can be called, with the Grenvilles, were as eager against the Ministers as could be wished. With respect to future business, my intention is to bring forward several questions after Easter, in some of which Pitt will (speaking of him, one must always say, '*I believe*,') support me—in others, *not*. I had meant, if I had not had your letter to-day, to put off writing to you for a few days, till I had something more arranged in regard to these measures than I yet have, and till I had received some communications from London; but as I have begun, I must go on. Russian Mediation, Ireland, and Military Defence, are the three general points I thought of. On the last of

these three *only*, I expect Pitt's *active* support; but on the others he may not, possibly, interfere. You know his sort of hydrophobia upon the Catholic question; but my motion might, I think, be simply directed to the necessity of inquiry in consequence of martial law, &c., as well as the new fact, brought out on Wrottesley's Motion, of Lord Hardwicke having applied in vain for extraordinary powers. To the Russian business, I hear, there is some particular objection, on account of some supposed transaction now pending, of which I know nothing, but am inquiring. It is very much the wish of Canning, &c., that we should begin, at least, with the motion which Pitt will support, *they* thinking it a great object, with a view to public effect, that he should appear in all his strength in support of the motion made by *me*. I say, let him show how much he strengthens us, and welcome; but let us show that without him we are not inconsiderable; and this, I think, if proper pains are taken, we might show. You will perceive by all this how very desirable every possible attendance is, *and* that for weeks at the very least. I do not push the consequence at present, but I fear I must shortly. If you are here, you will, of course, make such of the motions as you like yourself. I cannot yet fix, but I fear we cannot open the campaign later than the 16th of April, as Parliament meets again on the 5th. Pitt is, I believe, as far as temper goes, completely exasperated against the present men, and consequently desirous of making, conjointly with us, as strong an Opposition as possible; but then, again, his views are so narrow, and his fear of committing himself against the Court and its corrupt interests meets him so at every turn, that he cannot act like a man. Lord Camden's, Lord Castlereagh's, and Lord Carrington's influence with him is, I take it, all nonsense;

but the Court! the Court! He cannot bear to give up his hopes there,* and upon this principle, wishes to narrow every question of opposition, so as to be pledged to nothing but the insulated questions or questions of detail. This is a sad state of things; but forcing even him in is an inroad on royal power, and as such, good, come what may afterwards. I am told Lord St. Vincent is very angry with us who voted for the motion. He ought to be angry with those who advised him to resist the production of the papers, for if he had taken the other course, Pitt must have moved the address, and the division would have been triumphant for Lord St. Vincent."†

To explain this letter, it is necessary to state that Pitt had, in pursuance of his own peculiar notion of public duty, moved on the 15th of March for certain papers, preparatory to an inquiry into the naval administration of Earl St. Vincent.

It was clear that Mr. Addington could not give up his First Lord of the Admiralty as a victim. But Fox thought that the papers should have been given, and the censure that was to follow resisted. He accordingly voted for the motion for papers. Mr. Sheridan opposed it, and Pitt, in his reply, made some remarks, not in very good taste, upon Mr. Sheridan's red face. On the division, the numbers were—

For the motion	130
Against	201
Majority	71

Pitt, soon after this, seems to have made up his mind

* "A peep into the Closet intoxicates him," was said by Burke, of Pitt's father

† "Correspondence," vol. iii. p. 455.

that the Ministry ought not to remain, and he even determined to declare this opinion in Parliament. In a letter to Lord Melville, written on the 29th of March, he says, on the supposition of the King's recovery:

"In that event, I am strongly confirmed in the opinion that the present Government cannot last for any length of time, and still more so in the full conviction that every week for which its existence may be protracted will be attended with increased danger to the country. I have, therefore, satisfied myself that the time is near at hand at which, if a change does not originate from the Ministers themselves, or from the King, I can no longer be justified in not publicly declaring my opinion, and endeavouring, by parliamentary measures, to give it effect."*

Thus Pitt at length determined upon the only course consistent with his position and his duty to his country. He resolved, at the same time, that if he were asked by the King to form an Administration, he would advise the King to admit both Fox and Lord Grenville as members of a Ministry competent to direct affairs in a great crisis; but that if the King should insist upon the exclusion of Fox, he would give up this plan of comprehension, and be content with a narrow basis. Those who knew Pitt's intention could easily foresee the result. Pitt was a much greater statesman than the King. He had wide and extensive views of policy, which the King had not; he was a master of ancient and modern literature, which the King was not; he could, at any moment, wield all the strength, and display all the grace, of the English language, while the King could not put together two sentences without faults in grammar. But in the resources of

* "Stanhope's Life of Pitt," vol. iv. p. 142.

skill and subtlety, and of what is commonly called kingcraft, the King was infinitely superior to Pitt. From the commencement of his reign, he had practised on the statesmen of the greatest fame and popularity. He had defeated Pitt by appealing to George Grenville and the Duke of Bedford; he had got rid of G. Grenville by calling in Lord Rockingham; he had supplanted Lord Rockingham by calling upon Lord Chatham; upon Lord Chatham's failure, he had supplied his loss by making a tool of Lord North; and, lastly, he had defeated the coalition of Fox and North by calling upon the younger Pitt. Then, again, as to measures, he had baffled the plans of Pitt the elder, which would have pacified America, and the large and liberal views of Pitt the younger, which would have given peace to Ireland, by the intimate knowledge of men and of the national character, which gave him a mastery over the greatest and brightest of his subjects.

The King, in any crisis of this kind, also derived great strength from two circumstances—one, the respectable steadiness of his domestic life, and the other, the sympathy of his subjects with the most bigoted and most prejudiced of his opinions. If the King thought that the American rebels must be put down, so also thought his people; if the King was determined to exclude the Roman Catholics from Parliament and from office, his people applauded his conscientious attachment to the principles of our Protestant Constitution.

It is observed by Lord Grenville, in one of his private letters, that George III. always knew when he must give way. It was obvious that at this time Addington could not long be upheld by the royal arm, and the King's object was to admit Pitt, without colleagues of capacity, as the head

of a narrow Government. But before the King would consent to listen to any terms of capitulation, or to abandon the pilot who could not weather the storm, more parliamentary debate and more private communications were necessary.

In a letter of the 11th of April, Pitt mentions to Lord Melville, among those who would be ready to abandon Addington on a proper occasion (or convenient opportunity, we might add), the Chancellor (Lord Eldon), the Duke of Portland, Lord Chatham, Lord Castlereagh, and others.

On the 5th of April, Parliament met again, after the Easter recess, and on the 16th, on the motion respecting the Irish Militia, both Fox and Pitt having spoken against the measure as inadequate, Ministers had a majority of only twenty-one. After the division, Addington sent a message to Pitt to ask whether he would, through any common friend, or in any other way, communicate to him his views on the present state of affairs. Pitt's answer was that, neither through any common friend nor in any other way, would he impart to Mr. Addington his views on the present state of affairs, but that if the King chose to send him a message through any person with whom he could properly communicate, he would state to that person his views of the present state of public affairs. Addington, therefore, advised the King to send such a message, and Lord Eldon (the Chancellor) was entrusted by the King with a message to Pitt.

It is desirable, in view of the impending fall of Addington, to make clear the relation to each other of the different parties who had at sundry times, and on separate occasions, co-operated against Addington.

It was admitted on all hands that Pitt was in no way pledged to Fox. Fox was the first to admit Pitt's entire

freedom from any engagement to him. With regard to the Grenvilles, they had offered to Fox a complete union of parties, but, although Fox was in favour of an acceptance of these overtures, his friends had objected to anything more than concert on particular motions.

Fox seems to have been anxious, in a spirit of fairness, to make this clear, as we may judge from the following extract of a letter of Mr. Thomas Grenville of the 6th of May:

"Charles Street, May 6th, 1804.

"DEAR CHARLES,—I do not find your letter to-night till it is too late so to answer it as that you can hear from me before to-morrow morning. I will lose no time in communicating to my brother, to Lord Spencer, and to Windham, the sentiments which you wish them to know that you entertain respecting them, more especially because I consider that declaration from you in this moment as a valuable and honourable testimony of that fair and open and manly character which so much distinguishes you. It is true that the persons whom you name are unfettered by engagement. It is honourable in you to take this moment to declare that you consider them to be so, and it is gratifying to me to feel confident that (in the case of such an offer as you describe), their conduct will show the sincerity of the principles which they have avowed." *

Parliamentary proceedings advanced step by step with private communications.

On the 23rd of April, Fox moved to refer the several bills for the defence of the country to a committee of the whole House. Pitt, in an able speech, supported the motion. At four in the morning, the House divided:

* "Correspondence," vol. iv. p. 53.

For the motion	256
Against	204
Majority for Ministers	52

The concurrence of Fox, Pitt, the Grenvilles, Windham, Grey, and even Wilberforce in this vote of want of confidence was more decisive than the numbers. Addington still hesitated, but on the 25th, Pitt, in a speech of great power, opposed going into committee on the Army of Reserve Suspension Bill. Fox supported Pitt. The numbers were—

For Ministers	240
Against	203

The majority had thus diminished by 16, the minority only by one.

On the 26th, Addington, considering that attacks thus renewed could not be met successfully by diminishing forces, resolved to resign, and in an audience of the King, declared his intention. The King received the announcement with great concern, and proposed to the favourite to dissolve Parliament, or take any other step by which the Ministry might be maintained in power.

On the 27th, a most important letter from Pitt was delivered to the King by the Chancellor.

In this letter, Pitt unequivocally declared to the King that "an observation of twelve months of the different measures which have been suggested or adopted by Government, and of the mode in which they have been executed, has at length impressed me with a full conviction that, while the Administration remains in its present shape, and particularly under the direction of the person now holding the chief place in it, every attempt to provide adequately and effectually for

the public defence, and for meeting the extraordinary and unprecedented efforts of the enemy, will be fruitless." Pitt went on to say that "the same causes would prevent the success of any attempt to take advantage of a favourable conjuncture to establish such a co-operation abroad as might rescue the Continent from the miserable and abject situation to which it is now reduced."

This letter was of course very distasteful to the King. But a letter to the Chancellor, of May the 2nd, asking for an audience, and giving an outline of the proposals he should submit to the Crown, was still more repugnant to the King's rooted prejudices. Pitt fairly and fully pointed out in this letter "a very general desire that all the abilities and resources of the country should be exerted in meeting its present danger; and in pursuit of this object, all the points of difference, however great and important, which at a former period prevailed in this country, seem to all practical purpose to be superseded."

Pitt went on to say that "he should ask the King's permission to converse both with Lord Grenville and Fox, though he confessed that, if the King should feel insuperable objections to any part of his proposal, however he might regret his Majesty's decision, he should feel bound to acquiesce in it."

Surely it was not necessary to declare beforehand that he did not mean to persist in proposals which he thought it his public duty to make, and thus prepare for a retreat before the battle.

The King's answer is so curious that it is worth giving entire:

"Queen's Palace, May 5, 1804.

"The King has, through the channel of the Lord Chancellor, expressed to Mr. Pitt his approbation of that gentleman's sentiments of personal attachment to his Majesty, and his ardent desire to support any measure that may be conducive

to the real interest of the King or his Royal Family; but, at the same time, it cannot but be lamented that Mr. Pitt should have taken so rooted a dislike to a gentleman who has the greatest claim to approbation from his King and his country for his most diligent and able discharge of his duties of Speaker of the House of Commons for twelve years, and of his still more handsomely coming forward (when Mr. Pitt and some of his colleagues resigned their employments) to support his King and country when the most ill-digested and dangerous proposition was brought forward by the enemies of the Established Church. His Majesty has too good an opinion of Mr. Pitt to think he could have given his countenance to such a measure had he weighed its tendency with that attention which a man of his judgment should call forth when the subject under consideration is of so serious a nature; but the King knows how strongly the then two Secretaries of State who resigned at that period had allied themselves to the Roman Catholics. The former,* by his private correspondence with a former Lord Lieutenant of Ireland,† showed that he was become the follower of all the wild ideas of Mr. Burke; and the other,‡ from obstinacy, his usual director.

"The King can never forget the wound that was intended at the palladium of our Church Establishment, the Test Act, and the indelicacy, not to call it worse, of wanting to forego

* Mr. Dundas.

† The reference seems here to be to Lord Westmoreland, and to the period of 1793 and 1794. Mr. Rose, in reporting his long conversation with the King at Weymouth, in September, 1804, says: "I am persuaded his Majesty felt uncomfortably on the subject of the letters his lordship (Melville) wrote to Lord Westmoreland relative to the question of Catholic emancipation, while the latter was Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, which letters his Majesty told me Lord Westmoreland had shown to him, keeping them, with the others he had received on the same point, bound up in a volume."—"Diaries," vol. ii. p. 164.

‡ Lord Grenville.

his solemn Coronation Oath. He therefore here avows that he shall not be satisfied unless Mr. Pitt makes as strong assurances of his determination to support that wise law as Mr. Pitt in so clear a manner stated in 1796 in the House of Commons—viz., that the smallest alteration of that law would be a death-wound to the British Constitution.

"The whole tenour of Mr. Fox's conduct since he quitted his seat at the Board of Treasury, when under age, and more particularly at the Whig Club and other factious meetings, rendered his expulsion from the Privy Council indispensable, and obliges the King to express his astonishment that Mr. Pitt should one moment harbour the thought of bringing such a man before his royal notice. To prevent the repetition of it, the King declares that if Mr. Pitt persists in such an idea, or in proposing to consult Lord Grenville, his Majesty will have to deplore that he cannot avail himself of the ability of Mr. Pitt with necessary restrictions. These points being understood, his Majesty does not object to Mr. Pitt's forming such a plan for conducting the public business as may under all circumstances appear to be eligible; but should Mr. Pitt unfortunately find himself unable to undertake what is here proposed, the King will in that case call for the assistance of such men as are truly attached to our happy Constitution, and not seekers of improvements which, to all dispassionate men, must appear to tend to the destruction of that noble fabric which is the pride of all thinking minds and the envy of all foreign nations.

"The King thinks it but just to his present servants to express his trust that, as far as the public service will permit, he may have the benefit of their further services.

"GEORGE R." *

* "Life of Pitt," vol. iv. App. p. viii.

In reply to this intemperate letter, Pitt asked once more for an audience. But he again declared his willingness to acquiesce in the exclusion of Fox, and again professed his resolution to prevent, as far as was in his power, any agitation of the Catholic question.

The King wrote on the 5th to Lord Eldon, that he doubted whether Pitt would choose to have a personal interview, or "whether he will not rather prepare another essay, containing as many empty words and little information as the one he had before transmitted."

But on the 7th, the King saw Pitt, and becoming convinced that Addington could not be kept from sinking, even when propped up by the royal arm it was evidently his object to get Pitt back, with as few colleagues of large views and superior talents as possible. Accordingly, he employed all his powers both of cajolery and of obstinacy. "I must congratulate your Majesty," said Pitt, "on looking better now than on your recovery from your last illness," alluding to the spring of 1801. "That is not to be wondered at," replied the King. "I was then on the point of parting with an old friend; I am now about to regain one."

The skill and promptitude of this flattering answer could not be surpassed, and went far to secure a victory over his powerful subject.

In the rest of the conversation, the King was absolute and determined. "Never," said Pitt, "in any conversation I have had with the King in my life has he so baffled me."

Yet no one had a right to doubt Pitt's sincerity. Indeed, he prevailed so far as to obtain the King's consent to admit the Grenvilles and some of the friends of Fox. But Fox himself was proscribed, with a brand on his name.

The King, impatient to proclaim his triumph, wrote immediately to Addington, with a view, no doubt, to make his sentence of ostracism public: "Mr. Fox is excluded by the express command of the King to Mr. Pitt."*

The consequences could hardly be doubtful. Fox himself, indeed, having received a communication from Pitt through Lord Grenville, declared at once that he had expected his exclusion by the King; that, at his age, he was not ambitious of office, but that he had many followers attached to him, and he should be glad that some of them should hold office under Pitt.†

But Fox's friends, led by Mr. Grey, could not, as men of honour, acquiesce for a moment in the public stigma which the King had affixed upon their honest and courageous chief. They met at Carlton House the same evening, and unanimously agreed not to accept office if Fox were excluded. The Grenvilles, also, though not bound either by engagement or party connection, were too honourable and high-minded to acquiesce in the royal proscription. They met the same evening at Camelford House, where Lord Grenville, Lord Spencer, and Mr. Windham, followed by the rest of their friends, declared their adherence to the plan of a comprehensive Administration. In a letter to Pitt, dated on the 8th of May, and evidently intended as the manifesto of his party, Lord Grenville declared his sentiments.

The following are the grounds upon which the refusal of office are placed in this letter:

"It is unnecessary to dwell on the mischiefs which have already resulted from placing the great offices of Government

* "Life of Sidmouth," vol. ii. p. 288, beginning: "The King has this instant concluded," &c.

† "Stanhope's Life of Pitt," vol. iv. p. 172.

in weak and incapable hands. We see no hope of any effectual remedy for these mischiefs but by uniting in the public service 'as large a proportion as possible of the weight, talents, and character to be found in public men of all descriptions, and without any exceptions.' This opinion I have already had occasion to express to you in the same words, and we have for some time been publicly acting in conformity to it; nor can we, while we remain impressed with that persuasion, concur in defeating an object for which the circumstances of the present times afford at once so strong an inducement and so favourable an occasion.

"An opportunity now offers such as this country has seldom seen for giving to its Government, in a moment of peculiar difficulty, the full benefit of the service of all those who, by the public voice and sentiment, are judged most capable of contributing to its prosperity and safety. The wishes of the public on this subject are completely in unison with its interests, and the advantages which, not this country alone, but all Europe and the whole civilized world, might derive from the establishment of such an Administration at such a crisis, would probably have exceeded the most sanguine expectations.

"We are certainly not ignorant of the difficulties which might have obstructed the final accomplishment of such an object, however earnestly pursued; but when, in the very first instance, all trial of it is precluded, and when this denial is made the condition of all subsequent arrangements, we cannot but feel that there are no motives, of whatever description, which could justify our taking an active part in the establishment of a system so adverse to our deliberate and declared opinions."*

* "Fox's Correspondence," vol. iv. p. 55, and elsewhere.

Pitt, who could not fail to be touched with the magnanimity of Fox's conduct, and who could hardly be surprised that Fox's friends chose not to take advantage of his generous self-denial, was deeply hurt at, and keenly resented, Lord Grenville's determination. Lord Eldon has recorded this resentment in his private papers: "I recollect Mr. Pitt saying, with some indignation, he would teach that proud man that, in the service and with the confidence of the King, he could do without him, though he thought his health was such that it would cost him his life."

Pitt was not mistaken: the effort cost him his life. We may well ask, for what was this sacrifice made?

The answer must be that, when Pitt had conquered Addington in the Commons, he was himself conquered by the King in the closet, and that, unfortunately for himself and his country, he abandoned the path of the Constitution, and sacrificed his own opinions to the personal aversions and bigoted prejudices of the King. The consequences may be easily discerned by comparing the Ministry which Pitt had projected with that which he actually formed:

	As intended by Pitt.	As formed by Pitt.
First Lord of the Treasury	Mr. Pitt	Mr. Pitt.
Secretaries of State	Mr. Fox	Lord Harrowby.
	Lord Melville	Lord Camden.
	Lord Fitzwilliam	Lord Hawkesbury.
President of Council	Lord Grenville	Duke of Portland.
Lord Privy Seal	Duke of Portland	Lord Westmoreland.
Admiralty	Lord Spencer	Lord Melville.
Chancellor of Duchy	Mr. Windham	Lord Mulgrave.
Board of Control	Lord Castlereagh	Lord Castlereagh.
Lord Steward	Lord Camden	
Board of Trade	Lord Harrowby	
Secretary for Ireland	Mr. Canning	
Secretary at War	Mr. Grey	Mr. Dundas.

But it is not merely in the comparison of men to fill the

offices of State that the difference is to be perceived. The union of Pitt, Fox, Lord Grenville, Lord Spencer, Grey, and Windham in the Cabinet would have given a vigour to our efforts at home, and a weight to our Councils abroad, which could not otherwise be obtained. Pitt had truly judged that all the questions which had divided statesmen from 1793 to 1801 had given way to the paramount questions: How was England to be saved from destruction? How was Europe to be delivered from oppression? In this task, Pitt, Fox, and their followers were willing to combine. The prejudices and personal animosity of the King defeated the project. Some excuse has been made for the King on the ground of his paternal feelings. It has been said: "He complained of the great Whig statesman, not merely as a sovereign, but as a father. To the example of Mr. Fox he imputed both the lavish waste and the loose amours of the Prince of Wales." "To the precepts of Fox he imputed the Prince's politics, so directly in opposition to the King's."*

But the Prince of Wales did not need the example of Fox to countenance the lavish waste and the loose amours to which he was by nature prone, and from which he was by education not restrained. In fact, Fox had nothing to do either with his extravagance or his amours. As to Fox's political precepts, the Prince of Wales had never followed the teachings of Fox during the French War. So that although

> "The whisper that to greatness still too near
> Perhaps yet vibrates on the Sovereign's ear,"

it was in reality the pride of the Sovereign, and not the resentment of the father, which proscribed Fox. In 1806,

* Lord Stanhope's "Life of Pitt."

the King made no objection whatever to Lord Grenville's doing that which he had not permitted to Pitt in 1804. For he knew that Lord Grenville would be firm where Pitt was obsequious.

There is something very sad in the position of Pitt in May, 1804. In 1800, he had conceived a great and large plan, by which Ireland might have been induced to give her heart as well as her hand to Great Britain. In 1804, he had projected a comprehensive union of parties in one Administration. But neither as to measures nor as to men was he permitted to follow the bent of his own genius. Cabined and confined by the narrow spirit and strong will of the King, he laboured on from May, 1804, to January, 1806—little more than a year and a half of painful troubled life. Had he adhered to his better judgment, it is probable that Austerlitz would never have happened, and that his own life would have been spared for some years longer. Most assuredly his political reputation would not have suffered if he had consulted the interests of his country rather than the will of the King.

CHAPTER LXVI.

WAR.—PLANS OF NAPOLEON.—VICTORY OF TRAFALGAR.

THE history of Pitt's last Administration, though illustrated by the great victory of Trafalgar, is a melancholy one. Failing in health, he was repeatedly compelled by the claims of public business to give up the rest and the journeys to Bath which were necessary to repair his waste of strength. Deprived of the assistance of his former colleagues, Lord Grenville, Lord Spencer, and Mr. Windham, he was compelled by an accidental fall of Lord Harrowby to forego the aid of the cultivated talents and acute mind of that accomplished statesman.* Lord Melville, his only efficient colleague, a man of singular energy, sense, and capacity for business, was wrenched from his side by the discovery that he had violated an Act of Parliament, and appropriated to other purposes the moneys entrusted to him as Treasurer of the Navy. The vote of the House of Commons condemning Lord Melville gave to Pitt a pang from which he probably never recovered. When the vote was declared, he pressed his hat upon his brow, and the tears fell down his cheeks.†

* Lord Mulgrave supplied the place of Lord Harrowby. Coming in one day to Pitt's breakfast, he remarked with surprise a broken egg-spoon. "Have you not discovered," said Lady Hester Stanhope, "that Mr. Pitt sometimes uses very slight and weak instruments to effect his ends?"—"Life of Pitt," vol. iv. p. 87.

† "Life of Pitt," vol. iv.

The plan of Napoleon, now Emperor of the French, for the invasion of England was conceived with all the ability of a consummate master of the art of war. Napoleon saw very clearly that if his flotilla and gun-brigs carrying 60,000 men should attempt to cross the Channel, they would be sunk, disabled, and dispersed by the naval forces of England. To provide against the disaster and meet the difficulty thus foreseen, the great warrior projected a plan for uniting his various squadrons from different ports, and obtaining for a short time, perhaps for only twenty-four hours, the command of the Channel. In 1804, he prepared to accomplish his object by sending the fleet from Toulon to raise the blockade of Brest and Rochefort, and, collecting their squadrons, to appear at once with the whole force between Boulogne and Dover. The death of his favourite admiral deranged this plan for a time.

In 1805, the Emperor conceived a still larger and wider plan.

Admiral Villeneuve was ordered to sail to the West Indies, and when it might be expected the English fleet would follow, to return rapidly back and relieve the blockaded ports, as in the former year. The war between England and Spain gave Napoleon the further advantage of the aid of the Spanish fleets.

It is not pleasant to contemplate how near Napoleon was to the attainment of at least the first part of his object.

On the 30th of March, Villeneuve sailed from Toulon, and taking with him, from Cadiz, Admiral Gravina, with some Spanish ships, cast anchor at Martinique on the 24th of May. Here he was joined by Missiessy, from Rochefort, but not by Ganteaume, who had been unable to escape from Brest.

Nelson, learning Villeneuve's departure, followed him to the West Indies, whither he supposed him to have gone.

On the 9th of June, Villeneuve set sail, on his return to Europe, with twenty sail of the line. On the 22nd of July, off Cape Finisterre, he met Sir Robert Calder with fifteen. Two Spanish ships struck their flags to the English fleet, but on the next day, the action was not renewed, and the hostile fleets parted—Villeneuve to Corunna and Ferrol, Calder for the English coast. The insignificance of this result excited great indignation in England. Nelson, on his part, returning to Europe, arrived at Gibraltar on the 19th of July. Finding the enemy had not passed the Straits, he set off for the Irish coast, but not meeting with the French fleet there, he joined Admiral Cornwallis off Brest on the 15th of August.

At the end of July, Villeneuve was at Ferrol, where he found nine ships of the line, raising his force to twenty-nine sail of the line; he found also pressing orders from Napoleon to sail at once to Brest, and relieve Ganteaume from the blockade of Cornwallis. Had Villeneuve executed these orders, Cornwallis must in all probability have retired before the superior force of the Allies, and Villeneuve, with between thirty and forty sail of the line, would have obtained the command of the Channel. Invasion of England might then have become at least possible.

On the 4th of August, Napoleon wrote to Decrés, his Minister of Marine:

"The English do not know what is hanging over their heads. If we can be masters but for twelve hours, *l'Angleterre a vécu.*"

But Villeneuve was unequal to the immense responsibility with which he had been charged. Early in August, he left

Ferrol, and, distrusting his strength, sailed for Cadiz to obtain fresh reinforcements. On the 15th of August, Nelson joined Cornwallis, and being appointed to command the whole fleet, he arrived off Cadiz on the 29th of September, and blockaded the French and Spanish fleets.

On the 21st of October, he defeated the enemy, with the loss of nineteen sail of the line to the combined fleet, while the victory was rendered mournful to England by the death of Nelson himself.

A greater admiral than Nelson never adorned the naval service of England. Sagacious and skilful in his plans, daring and prompt in their execution, he spread terror wherever he went, and by his name alone intimidated the enemies of his country.

On the day of the battle, he appeared in full uniform, with the star of the Bath on his breast. A great believer in the saying that every bullet has its billet, he replied many years before to a lady who had advised him not to expose his person so recklessly, as he was wont to do: "The bullet that kills me will have on it, 'Horatio Nelson, his with speed.'"

Fox, with the rest of England, greatly rejoiced at the victory, and deeply lamented the loss of Nelson. Fox wrote to Lord Holland:

"It is a great event, and by its solid as well as brilliant advantages, far more than compensates for the temporary relief which it will certainly afford to Pitt in his distress. I am very sorry for poor Nelson, and though his conduct at Naples was atrocious, I believe he was at bottom a good man," &c.*

Fox highly valued the great admiral, and admired his

* "Correspondence," vol. iv. p. 121.

energy, his skill, and his simplicity of character, though he distrusted his political judgment.

At no time during the French revolutionary war did England incur so great a danger as at the period when Villeneuve executed so weakly the bold plan of the mighty Emperor. But Napoleon's eagle eye swept over the whole horizon, and, regardless of the enemy who had escaped, prepared to transfix at one fell swoop the quarry still within his reach.

CHAPTER LXVII.

PITT'S RENEWED POLICY OF COALITIONS.—TREATY OF PETERSBURG.—ULM, VIENNA, AUSTERLITZ.—TREATY OF PRESBURG.

WE have seen how, in the first fervour of the revolutionary war, the energy of the French people gave them the victory over the combined forces of the Allies, and how Pitt tried in vain by prodigal subsidies to awaken an energy and vigour in Austria which had no existence in the Councils of that empire.

In 1804, he had to contend with France in a new form. The Republican fury no longer existed; in its place was a despotic chief of surpassing military talents, great in war, great in administration, who had restored the national Christian worship, and had given to the people a new code framed by the hands of learned Royalist and Republican lawyers, combining the elements of the old laws of France with the lights of modern science.

While thus amending the laws, Napoleon took care, by revoking the most cruel of the measures devised against the emigrants, and by conciliatory conduct towards all parties, to unite the whole nation in his favour. In the latter days of the Directory, he had said to a private friend: "*Ces gens-ci ont gouverné par l'esprit de côterie; il faut gouverner par l'esprit national.*" Thus inspired, Napoleon had at his

command all the resources of France. He could raise her armies to almost any amount, and he could direct them, with the skill of a Hannibal or a Cæsar, to the most vulnerable points in the bodies of his Continental rivals.

But while Napoleon had so many resources for war, he was not averse to peace. In June, 1804, Fox and Grey communicated to Pitt an overture they had received from Mr. Livingstone, American Minister at Paris, who had communicated with M. de Talleyrand and received from him a project of a treaty of peace. Holland and Switzerland were to be evacuated by France; Malta to be delivered to Russia. Some months afterwards, M. Novosiltzoff brought from Russia a project of mediation. But Pitt would not hear either of the French project or the Russian. He had on his side nothing to give but those large subsidies by which he had formerly enabled Prussia to stifle the last breath of Polish nationality, and Austria to absorb the Republic of Venice. Preferring, therefore, schemes of war which had repeatedly failed to plans of peace, which, based on the guarantee of Russia, Austria, and Prussia, might have afforded, if not indemnity for the past, a fair hope of security for the future, he began again to scatter subsidies and to organize defeat. The first Sovereign with whom the Minister succeeded in forming a treaty was the Emperor of Russia. On the 11th of April, 1805, a treaty was signed at Petersburg by Lord Granville Leveson, on the part of England, by Prince Adam Czartoryski and M. Novosiltzoff, on the part of Russia.

The evacuation of Hanover and the north of Germany, on the one hand, of Piedmont and the whole of Italy, on the other, with the independence of Holland and Switzerland, were the declared objects of this treaty. England was to

furnish not only troops and ships, but subsidies in money. Other Powers of Europe, especially Austria and Prussia, were to be invited to join for these purposes in a general European league. Pitt, having so far succeeded, endeavoured, subsidy in hand, to procure the co-operation of the other Powers.

Thus attracted, the Emperor of Austria, on the 9th of August, acceded at St. Petersburg to the treaty of England and Russia, demanding at the same time a grant of three millions sterling.

Pitt then, in the same spirit, sent orders to offer subsidies to Prussia for her adherence to the new coalition. But the eagle watched his movements.

When Napoleon heard that Villeneuve had gone to Cadiz, he expressed in mutterings and abrupt questions his rage at the defeat of what he called the best and most certain of success of all the projects he had ever devised. But, speedily recovering from his transport of rage, he dictated to Daru, the historian of Venice, then the chief clerk of his War Office, a series of combinations by which the various corps of his Grand Army were to be assembled from different parts of France, and to arrive on a fixed day in the neighbourhood of the Danube.

On the 2nd of September, the Emperor left Boulogne, and on the 26th, he was at Strasburg. General Mack, on the 8th of September, had crossed the Inn, and had posted himself at Ulm.

Napoleon told his troops that he had now more need of their legs than of their arms. By a series of marches somewhat resembling Marlborough's march before the battle of Blenheim, Napoleon placed his army between Ulm and Vienna, and, in a few days, forced Mack to surrender. On

the 19th of October, the capitulation was signed, and on the 20th, the day before the battle of Trafalgar, Mack marched out of Ulm at the head of thirty thousand good troops, who laid down their arms in presence of Napoleon.

The Emperor of the French, following up this blow, replaced his ally, the Elector of Bavaria, in his palace at Munich, and marching onwards, his vanguard entered Vienna on the 13th of November.

On the 2nd of December was fought the great battle of Austerlitz, in which Napoleon, with consummate skill, drew on the enemy to attack his centre, and then falling upon them with vigour and masterly combination, drove Austrians and Russians in confusion before him. The loss of the Allies was said to be fifteen thousand killed and wounded, twenty thousand prisoners, one hundred and eighty pieces of cannon taken.

This decisive victory was followed, on the 25th of December, by the peace of Presburg. By this treaty, Venice was yielded to the kingdom of Italy, and the Tyrol to Bavaria. The Emperor of Russia retired discomfited to his own dominions.

Such was the end of the labour of Pitt to form a new Coalition. Fox had predicted the issue of this imprudent attempt. In a letter to his nephew of the 24th of July, 1804, he says: "Prussia without Austria would be worse than nothing, and the latter, in her present state, could only be a burthen upon us, and possibly—nay, probably—furnish means of aggrandizing both France and Prussia. . . . It is quite vexatious to hear of such folly. Austria, with all her weakness, is the only effectual barrier to look to in better times against France—at least, so these politicians say; and yet they would, in the

most disadvantageous moment, and not called upon by any actual aggression on the part of France, risk her total annihilation."* Ulm, Austerlitz, and Presburg could be no surprise to Fox. How the blow told on the shattered health of Pitt we shall see in the next chapter.

It must be said, however, that until some one nation of the Continent should take a real interest in contesting the supreme dominion of France, there was no hope for Europe.

While the French marched as conquerors over the soil of Germany, they were everywhere received by the people as friends and comrades. The hospitality of their German hosts was celebrated and thankfully remembered by the soldiers of Napoleon. Neither Austerlitz nor Jena embittered the friendly relations of the victors and the vanquished.

But until the nations should be prepared to fight for their independence, there was little hope for the Sovereigns and armies of the Continent. It required all the energies of the people of Europe to contend with success against a Sovereign who was more than a match for all the Courts whose alliance Pitt had purchased at so extravagant a price.

* "Correspondence," vol. iv. p. 58.

CHAPTER LXVIII.

DOMESTIC POLITICS OF ENGLAND.—DECAY AND DEATH OF MR. PITT.

THE formation of Pitt's second Administration, in 1804, left all political parties in a state of uneasy distrust and vague expectation. Sheridan, Erskine, and Tierney, had broken off from the small party of whose constancy and union, under Fox, that great leader had so much reason to be proud. "There are but forty of them," said Lord Thurlow, "but there is not one of them who is not ready to be hanged for Fox."

On the other hand, Lord Castlereagh and Lord Hawkesbury had been for a time led away from their old leader, and had followed a separate standard. Mr. Canning was so little of their mind that he declared himself ready to resign, if a reconciliation took place with Addington. Addington sometimes returned to his old chief, and sometimes relied on his following of country gentlemen, who felt great confidence in his want of brilliancy, and resented Pitt's attachment to his old friend Dundas and to his young friend Canning. Addington might well say of his party:

"They think we're honest, for they know we're dull."

Fox had no objection to a coalition of parties, provided there were a general exclusion of mediocrities, and no other exclusion whatever. At other times, he declared he would

never serve under Pitt, and that he trusted to Pitt's assumption of superiority to put an end to any negotiation for a combination of parties. In a letter to Grey, he says: "I presume the intention is to put us in the wrong in the opinions of as many people as possible, and in this way, if Pitt were to manage dextrously, I fear he might have some success. I have strong dependence, however, upon his temper and character, and suspect he will be more anxious to keep himself clear of the imputation of what I should call modesty and humiliation than to fix upon us that of unreasonableness."

In this estimate of Pitt, he was not mistaken. But, in fact, after leading in the Cabinet and the House of Commons for many years, it would have been real humiliation for Pitt, if Grey, or Fitzwilliam, or Moira, or Lord Grenville, had been placed at the head of a new Administration.

Pitt always contended that the First Minister should be the statesman in actual possession of the confidence of the Crown and of the House of Commons, and in this maxim, it appears to me, he was not mistaken.

Fox, on the other hand, cared only for the Foreign Office, and was quite ready to be second, provided a man like Lord Fitzwilliam were his nominal superior.

Mr. Rose, a most shrewd observer, long and warmly attached to Pitt, was strongly in favour of immediate coalition, thinking that, if the junction were delayed, and Fox were to enter office, at the head of a combined party, led by Fox, Grenville, and Addington, the chief influence in such a Ministry must belong to Fox, and not to Pitt. This was no doubt true, and Pitt, who probably viewed the matter in the same light, besought his Sovereign to allow him to make an overture to Lord Grenville and Fox at this

time. But the will which ruled the destinies of England was not propitious.

At the end of September, 1804, Mr. Rose was at Weymouth. The King spoke to him of his late and his present Ministry. He said the change of Lord Hawkesbury for Lord Harrowby was a most useful one; that Lord Hawkesbury was utterly unfit for the situation; that however Foreign Ministers might differ in other points, their dislike to, and contempt for, Lord Hawkesbury was unanimous; that Lord Hawkesbury always approached him with a vacant kind of grin, and had hardly anything business-like to say to him.

Thus ill disposed towards Lord Hawkesbury, the King, according to Mr. Rose, reserved his veto for Fox alone. "His Majesty added" (after stating some particulars) "that he had taken a positive determination not to admit Mr. Fox into his Councils, *even at the hazard of a civil war.*"*

In January, 1806, the King, without a moment's pause, admitted Fox into his Councils. But he had then no other resource.

In September, 1805, Pitt went to Cuffnells, on his way from Weymouth. He told Mr. Rose that he considered he could dispose of the offices of Lord Camden, Lord Castlereagh, Lord Mulgrave, Lord Barham, Lord Harrowby, and Lord Hardwicke, besides minor situations. But when he went to Weymouth and saw the King, he met with an absolute rejection of all his proposals.

The King told Mr. Rose he would not take a single individual of the Opposition, observing, in a manner that precluded reply, "that he could not trust them, and they could have no confidence in him."

* "Diaries of G. Rose," vol. ii. p. 156-7.

Such was the conduct of the King to his favourite Minister, who, beset with difficulties and dangers, foreign and domestic, was still only too ready to sacrifice his life and his country to please his unreasoning master. Mr. Rose thought the increased obstinacy of the King on this point was owing to the influence of Lord Hawkesbury. Possibly Lord Hawkesbury had heard a whisper of Fox's proposed exclusion of mediocrities, and saw too clearly the consequence. Had Pitt succeeded in his proposals, it is probable that Fox would have been persuaded by his friends to accept the Foreign Office; that Lord Grenville would have been President of the Council, Lord Spencer First Lord of the Admiralty, Mr. Windham Secretary of State, and Mr. Grey Secretary at War. Pitt seems to have formed the same estimate which had been formed by Fox of Mr. Grey's peculiar fitness for conducting the war.

Pitt returned from Weymouth, however, dispirited, out of health, and almost overwhelmed by a burden which his Sovereign refused to lighten.

Pitt spent the greater part of October at Walmer Castle, planning expeditions against the French coast. But, dining in London on the 2nd of November, rumours arrived of the disaster at Ulm, and the report was repeated by Lord Malmesbury to Pitt, who sat next him. "Don't believe a word of it; it is all a fiction," answered Pitt, almost peevishly, and so loud as to be heard by all who were near him. The next day, Pitt and Lord Mulgrave went to Lord Malmesbury with a Dutch newspaper, in which the capitulation of Ulm was inserted at length. As neither of them understood Dutch, they asked Lord Malmesbury to translate it for them. Lord Malmesbury adds: "I observed but too clearly the effect it had on Pitt, though he did his utmost to conceal it.

This was the last time I saw him. The visit has left an indelible impression on my mind, as his manner and look were not his own, and gave me, in spite of myself, a foreboding of the loss with which we were threatened."* On the 9th of November, Pitt attended the dinner at Guildhall on Lord Mayor's Day. The Lord Mayor proposed Pitt's health, as the saviour of Europe. Pitt replied nearly in these words: "I return you many thanks for the honour you have done me, but Europe is not to be saved by any single man. England has saved herself by her own exertions, and will, as I trust, save Europe by her example." He then sat down. The Duke of Wellington, who heard the speech, said afterwards; "He was scarcely up two minutes, yet nothing could be more perfect." The Duke of Wellington met him in the same month at Lord Camden's, at the Wilderness, and gave to Lord Stanhope many years afterwards this account of him: "I think he did not seem ill in the November previous. He was extremely lively and in good spirits. It is true that he was *by way* of being an invalid at that time. A great deal was always said about his taking his rides, for he used then to ride eighteen or twenty miles a day. . . . At dinner, Mr. Pitt drank little wine, but it was at that time the fashion to sup, and he then took a great deal of port-wine and water."†

I have heard from others who met him at Lord Abercorn's, at the Priory, that, besides the wine he drank at dinner, he used to drink as much as a bottle of port-wine with water at supper. I have heard also from persons intimate with Pitt that during his later years, when he had any great exertion to make in the House of Commons, Sir Walter

* "Malmesbury's Diary," vol. iv.

† "Stanhope's Life of Pitt," vol. iv. p. 346-7.

Farquhar prepared him for it by administering some strong cordial to keep up his strength. The bodily fatigue and mental excitement of directing the foreign policy, the finances, and the military measures of a great war, were too much for a body already enfeebled by many years of official and parliamentary labour. But the fatal blow was yet to come.

Mr. Rose says in his "Diary": "Although he was sometimes indisposed (seldom, indeed, for a long interval without taking cordial medicines) he was, when at Cuffnells in September last, and when I left him at Weymouth in the same month, apparently as well, or nearly so, as I ever saw him. And from all I heard, there was no failure in his health till the beginning of December, when, more from precaution than from any other cause, he was advised to go to Bath, some symptoms of the gout having appeared. The waters there almost immediately threw the gout into his right foot, and soon after into the left; but on receiving the account of the armistice, after the battle of Austerlitz, the gout quitted the extremities, and he fell into a debility which continually increased till it deprived the world of a man who appeared to have been born to save it." *

Lord Stanhope's account is not very different. He says that Mr. Wilberforce, though he never saw Pitt after the battle of Austerlitz, used to speak of "the Austerlitz look." But nothing is more authentic than a statement put in writing by Lord Stanhope's father, then Lord Mahon, who was frequently an inmate in the house of Pitt, his uncle. "The immediate cause of his death was the battle of Austerlitz. I dined with him the day before his departure for Bath, when I found him in his usual spirits; and on inquir-

* "Diary of G. Rose," vol ii. p. 235.

ing after his health, I learnt from those about him that he had some flying gout, which it was hoped might become a regular fit. Such was, indeed, the effect of the Bath waters; but after he received the despatches containing the account of that most disastrous battle, he desired a map to be brought to him and to be left alone. His reflections were so painful that the gout was repelled, and attacked some vital organ."*

As Parliament was ordered to meet on the 20th of January, Pitt set out from Bath on the 9th to reach his villa at Putney. The day before the journey, he said emphatically to Lord Melville: "I wish the King may not live to repent, and sooner than he thinks, the rejection of the advice which I pressed on him at Weymouth."

On his arrival at Putney, a journey which took him three days, Lady Hester was greatly shocked at his wasted appearance and hollow tone of voice. This was on the 11th of January, nine days before the day fixed for the meeting of Parliament. On Tuesday, the 14th, he saw Lord Wellesley, and spoke to him with lively joy at his return from India, and with spirits as high as ever. Nevertheless, Lord Wellesley thus recorded his impression of his appearance:

"Notwithstanding Mr. Pitt's kindness and cheerfulness, I saw that the hand of death was fixed upon him. This melancholy truth was not known or believed by either his friends or opponents. . . . I warned Lord Grenville of Mr. Pitt's approaching death. He received the fatal intelligence with the utmost feeling, in an agony of tears, and immediately determined that all hostility in Parliament should be suspended."

* "Life of Pitt," vol. iv. p. 353.

Such, also, was the decision of Fox. On the 21st, there was a meeting of a few of the principal persons of the Opposition at Fox's house.

"Fox stated to them that he thought it impossible that they could enter into the discussion. He could not while he had the idea that Pitt was in extremities—*mentem mortalia tangunt.*"*

On the 22nd, the Bishop of Lincoln, one of the most attached friends of Pitt, informed him of his danger. He then prepared to administer the sacrament to him, but Pitt said he had not strength to go through. The Bishop then desired to pray with him; upon which Pitt asked Sir Walter Farquhar how long he thought he might hold out. Sir Walter said he could not say he might not recover. Upon which, apparently regardless of so insincere an answer, he turned to the Bishop and said: "He had, as he feared was the case with many others, neglected prayer too much to allow him to hope it could be very efficacious *now*."

He, however, joined the Bishop in prayer with his hands clasped, with much earnestness. He said: "I throw myself entirely upon the mercy of God through the merits of Christ." He also at this time spoke of the innocency of his life as giving him hope of mercy. During that night, his mind frequently wandered. About half-past two, he ceased moaning. James Stanhope, his nephew, who was watching, says: "Shortly afterwards, with a much clearer voice than he spoke in before, and in a tone I never shall forget, he exclaimed: 'Oh, my country! how I leave my country!' From that time, he never spoke or moved, and at half-past four, expired without a groan or struggle."†

* "Life of Horner," Jan. 22, 1806.

† "Life of Pitt," vol. iv. p. 382.

There is something in the death of Pitt, at the time at which it happened and in the circumstances attending it, peculiarly mournful.

He had governed England with a power of which there have been few examples. For twenty years and upwards, he was First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer. His oratory was magnificent; his power of transacting business unequalled. He had the entire confidence of the King; he had the enthusiastic support of the House of Commons.

With all this power, his greatest measure, his French War, must be pronounced a failure. He had formed three coalitions on the Continent, he had given to the framing of them the whole resources of his mind, he had lavished upon them, when framed, the treasures accumulated by an industrious people in the enjoyment of liberty and commerce; yet they had all failed, and the disastrous termination of the latest of his combinations was the immediate cause of his death. It was not given to him to see the reaction; Vimiera and Oporto, Salamanca and Vittoria, Leipsig and Waterloo, were hidden from his eyes.

Let us add to this catalogue of misfortunes that Pitt's most eminent friend, the statesman who had conducted the military affairs of the country in his first Administration, and who had prepared the fleet for the glories of Trafalgar during his second, had been impeached by the House of Commons, and his disgrace had drawn from Pitt tears of agony and pain. So much did Pitt feel the political danger of further attacks in Parliament on this subject, that he is said to have remarked to Mr. Huskisson: "We might get over the battle of Austerlitz; we cannot get

over the Tenth Report. Such is the nature of Englishmen!"*

Gloomy indeed were the circumstances of defeat and isolation which surrounded Pitt's last hours.

If, passing from the failure of his foreign policy and the disgrace of his most intimate friend and most able colleague, we consider his general policy, we shall have still more reason to wonder that a Minister powerful beyond example should have accomplished so little. Except the commercial treaty with France and the union with Ireland, no great acts of policy are associated with his name. The first of these measures was soon interrupted by the war with France; the second was deprived of the healing influence it might have produced if Pitt had been allowed to connect with it a participation of the Roman Catholic body in the rights and privileges of Englishmen. Commercial restrictions and religious disabilities were the system which prevailed after Pitt's death, as before his accession to power. Pitt, as Lord Harrowby often assured me, professed Whig principles. This I can well believe. He for several years endeavoured to promote reform in Parliament; he incurred the loss of office in an attempt to admit Roman Catholics and Dissenters to Parliament and to office; he spoke eloquently for the abolition of the slave trade; he endeavoured to find a substitute for tithes; he agreed with Adam Smith in his theory of political economy. But all these enlightened views were blasted; all progress arrested; the slave trade continued to flourish, Parliamentary Reform was rejected, religious disabilities were maintained, because the wise and liberal views of the Minister were thwarted by the Sovereign whom he obeyed but too implicitly, and by the Tory

* From Lord Holland.

party which professed to follow him, but in reality forced him into the path which Lord North had trod before him.

The unhappy years 1783 and 1784 destroyed at the same time Fox's prospects of office and Pitt's power of doing good. Shorn of his beams, Pitt's Tory adherents, as Mr. Canning truly said, worshipped him only in his eclipse. It is a melancholy example of great talents, combined with great power and great integrity, perverted to the injury of mankind.

If we look for the cause of Pitt's power to do mischief and inability to do good, we must attribute it chiefly to his unhappy decision in regard to the French Revolution. Had he pursued the course he evidently intended in 1792 — had he remained neutral and unmoved amid the horrors of the Reign of Terror—he would have spared his country a vast expenditure of money, and a great waste of life Had he framed a wise plan of mediation, as he seems in December, 1792, to have projected, he might have prevented or shortened the war on the Continent, and have spared Europe the sufferings and devastations of a protracted struggle.

But when he determined upon taking an active part in the war, he exposed the weak corrupt monarchies of the Continent to a contest with a nation wild in its enthusiasm, maddened by the attempt to bind it, and burning to give its blood and treasure in defence of its independence.

Unless a similar enthusiasm could be roused in Holland, Germany, and Spain, such an attempt was sure to cost millions without result, and to add to the power of France.

Two excuses have been put forward to palliate, if not to

justify, this great and irreparable error—one by Lord Macaulay, the other by Sir Archibald Alison.

Lord Macaulay's plea is, that Pitt was only a tall man in a crowd, who was forced on by those behind him. But a tall man in a crowd has no alternative but that of going on or being trampled upon and crushed, whereas Pitt had the obvious resource of telling his Sovereign and Parliament that he was ready to resign his office, but not to undertake a war he disapproved. The nation might still have refused peace, but Pitt would not have had the reproach of having lent his arm to tear down the olive branch.

The other defence—that of Sir Archibald Alison—is, that if we had not gone to war with France, our own Constitution would have been in danger from democratic innovations. But surely the Parliament and the Crown would have been able to check any pernicious change or seditious movement without making war on a neighbouring nation which had committed no aggression upon us. For the plea that France was the first to proclaim war is evidently a quibbling evasion of the question. At that time, Pitt had made up his mind, and had already declared that he thought war with France justifiable and even necessary. Had the French not proclaimed war, England would have done so.

A few remarks as to the powers of his mind and the leading traits of his character shall conclude the sketch.

He was a great orator; master of a stately, correct, and dignified style; methodical in his arguments, brilliant in his declamation, bitter in his scorn, with a clear and powerful voice, eager and energetic action, moving his hearers at will to anger, to pity, to the highest pitch of patriotism, to the most fervid glow of indignation. He was a good classical scholar, well acquainted with English literature, and able,

without premeditation, to express his thoughts, or those of others, in the most happy language. As an instance of his knowledge of Greek, it may be mentioned that one day, when Lord Harrowby and Lord Grenville were waiting for Pitt to go out riding, they lit upon a passage in Thucydides which neither of them could construe. Pitt came down-stairs and read it off to them in English at once.

Of the qualities of his character, one of the highest was his boldness. Amid all the difficulties of war, of mutiny in the navy, of party conflict, of financial distress, his fortitude never failed. But above all the rest was his integrity. I speak of the great motives of public duty and private honour which always animated him. Be his mistakes what they might, he was a great man, conspicuous to his own age, dear to his friends, a pure, conscientious, unsullied statesman.

In order to fill up some of the deficiencies of the sketch, I propose to quote in this place the opinions of two men who knew him well, the Marquis Wellesley and Mr. George Rose. Lord Wellesley, himself an accomplished scholar, says of Pitt:

"He was perfectly accomplished in classical literature, both Latin and Greek. The accuracy and strength of his memory surpassed every example which I have observed; but the intrinsic vigour of his understanding carried him far beyond the mere recollection of the great models of antiquity in oratory, poetry, history, and philosophy. He had drawn their essence into his own thoughts and language; and, with astonishing facility, he applied the whole spirit of ancient learning to his daily use. Those studies were his constant delight and resort. At Holwood, in Kent, his favourite residence, and at Walmer Castle, his apartments

were strewn with Latin and Greek classics; and his conversation with those friends who delighted in similar studies frequently turned on that most attractive branch of literature; but he was so adverse to pedantry or affectation of superior knowledge, that he carefully abstained from such topics in the presence of those who could not take pleasure in them. In these pursuits, his constant and congenial companion was Lord Grenville, who has often declared to me that Mr. Pitt was the best Greek scholar he ever conversed with.

"Mr. Pitt was also as complete a master of all English literature as he was undoubtedly of the English language. He amply possessed every resource which could enliven retirement. No person had a more exquisite sense of the beauties of the country. He took the greatest delight in his residence at Holwood, which he enlarged and improved (it may be truly said) with his own hands. Often have I seen him working in his woods and gardens with his labourers for whole days together, undergoing considerable bodily fatigue, and with so much eagerness and assiduity, that you would suppose the cultivation of his villa to be the principal occupation of his life. He was very fond of exercise on horseback, and when in the country frequently joined the hounds of his neighbourhood, both at Holwood and Walmer Castle. At the latter place, he lived most hospitably, entertaining all his neighbours, as well as the officers of the neighbouring garrisons and of the ships in the Downs; and he was most attentive to his duties of Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports, which called him frequently to Dover, and sometimes to the other ports.

"But, in all places and at all times, his constant delight was society. There he shone with a degree of calm and steady

lustre which often astonished me more than his most splendid efforts in Parliament. His manners were perfectly plain, without any affectation. Not only was he without presumption, or arrogance, or any air of authority, but he seemed utterly unconscious of his own superiority, and much more disposed to listen than to talk. He never betrayed any symptom of anxiety to usurp the lead or to display his own powers, but rather inclined to draw forth others, and to take merely an equal share in the general conversation; then he plunged heedlessly into the mirth of the hour, with no other care than to promote the general good-humour and happiness of the company. His wit was quick and ready, but it was rather lively than sharp, and never envenomed with the least taint of malignity; so that instead of exciting admiration or terror, it was an additional ingredient in the common enjoyment. He was endowed beyond any man of his time whom I knew with a gay heart and a social spirit.

"With these qualities, he was the life and soul of his own society. His appearance dispelled all care; his brow was never clouded, even in the severest public trials, and joy, and hope, and confidence beamed from his countenance in every crisis of difficulty and danger. He was a most affectionate, indulgent, and benevolent friend, and so easy of access that all his acquaintance in any embarrassment would rather resort to him for advice than to any person who might be supposed to have more leisure. His heart was always at leisure to receive the communications of his friends, and always open to give the best advice in the most gentle and pleasant manner. I cannot resist the conclusion that a pure and clear conscience must have been the original source of such uniform cheerfulness and gaiety of spirit."* Mr. Rose,

* "Diaries and Correspondence of G. Rose," vol. ii. p. 229.

giving an account of his own reflections on his return home from his attendance on the funeral, says: "On my return to my own house, I indulged myself with what has been very frequently the occupation of my mind during the past five weeks, and will not unfrequently employ it during the remainder of my life, the reflection on the character and talents of my deceased friend, and the loss I have sustained in his death, banishing entirely every consideration of an interested nature. His talents; the quickness of his perception, almost intuitive; his discerning judgment; the firmness of his mind, which secured to him the fullest advantage of that discernment in cases of the extremest public dangers and calamities, such as, indeed, had never occurred since the Revolution—namely, the democratical exertions, prepared to be supported by an immense armed force, influenced by meetings, public and private, of those of the most dangerous principles and active minds, as well as by libels of a treasonable nature; the mutiny of the fleet; the stoppage of the banks; famine in the country; invasion threatened by an immense force of the enemy, brought down to their coast, opposite to ours, with ships collected sufficient to transport them. In short, no danger (however great) ever dismayed him or deprived him of the advantages resulting from the quickness of his conception. A certain shyness or reserve with persons he had little or no acquaintance with, and his general carriage (walking remarkably upright), were by many mistaken for pride, of which he had as little as almost any gentleman I ever knew: for in families, or with people with whom he was acquainted, his address and manner were the easiest and most pleasant possible—his temper, as I before observed, the sweetest I think I ever knew; on no occasion ruffled by any dangers, difficulties, or unpleasant occurrences, except in

the House of Commons, where undoubtedly he sometimes, under considerable provocation, gave vent to his feelings; and when he did, it was with wonderful effect, for his eloquence was tremendous as well as persuasive. Few could know him as well as myself. From Christmas, 1783, to the time of his dissolution, I was in constant habits of the warmest affection and friendship, as well as of business, with him. Hardly three days passed without my seeing him throughout that period, except during the five or six weeks in the summer, and the three weeks at Christmas, which I used to spend at Cufnells in the year. He hardly ever had the slightest thought about himself; his mind was wholly occupied with his country. His most uncommon share of good-nature occasioned his giving way sometimes to solicitations he should have resisted, especially with regard to peerages, of which he was liberal to a most unfortunate extent; but so far from gaining political strength thereby, I am perfectly sure he suffered by them, for it frequently happened that an enemy was chosen in the room of the newly-created peer. In the administration of finances, and in the management of the public purse, it is not possible any one could be more entirely pure and disinterested. He abolished all contracts whatever, all purchases by commission, all private distributions of loan, and every other species of money influence; which was, in truth, at my solicitation. He abolished also the sinecure employments in the Customs, numerous and valuable. He established a Sinking Fund in the year 1786, when the finances were in so wretched a state, that no other man would have entertained *a thought* of the kind, which amounts now to more than eight millions a year, and which in no public exigency would he allow to be touched. These are only some of his internal arrangements and measures of

domestic policy. In foreign politics, he was intelligent, able, and indefatigable. I have heard several of the foreign Ministers say they would rather discuss intricate matters with him than with any other man they ever knew—particularly Count Woronzow, who, I verily believe, laments his loss most deeply. The last union of Austria and Sweden with Russia, in which Prussia had actually undertaken to join, was accomplished absolutely by himself, and would have saved Europe, almost to a certainty, if it had not been defeated by the conduct of those who were entrusted with the command of the Austrian armies. The effect of these miscarriages has been already truly stated to have occasioned his death. Other points in his character may occur to me; if they do, I shall note them. A more amiable one, upon the whole, no man can leave behind him."*

There is one part of Mr. Pitt's conduct for which, it seems to me, he has been overpraised, and another for which he has been unjustly blamed. The praise given to him for disinterestedness seems to me over-charged. He had, from the time that he was made Warden of the Cinque Ports, more than 10,000*l.* a year of official salary. That he might have lived as a bachelor on this income cannot well be denied. That he neglected his private affairs, and allowed himself to be cheated by his servants, may well be excused in a man so loaded with public cares; but it can hardly be a matter of panegyric.

On the other hand, he has been blamed for his failure to patronise and reward men of letters. But it may be doubted whether the patronage of letters is a part of the proper functions of a government.

Augustus and Cardinal Richelieu favoured letters, but

* "Diaries and Correspondence of G. Rose," vol. ii. p. 258.

they did so for political ends: they subsidized in order to subdue, they courted in order to corrupt. Lorenzo de Medici, it is true, also patronised poets and philosophers, but he was himself a man of letters, and favoured from affection as well as policy what Machiavel calls a "nobile ozio."

Louis XIV. patronised letters; but Racine and Boileau suffered detriment—Boileau from his fulsome flattery, and Racine from incurring the displeasure, of the *Grand Monarque.*

Sometimes, indeed, a man of letters in old age, or in poverty, may derive advantage from a discriminating patronage. But is it always discriminating? Pope, who was not pensioned, says:

> "The hero William, and the martyr Charles,
> This knighted Blackmore and that pensioned Quarles."

Swift, disparaging Young, says:

> "And Young must torture his invention
> To flatter knaves, or lose his pension."

Thus his character suffered, while his income was improved.

The independence of the literary character is in itself a distinction; no one can imagine that Burns raised his position by accepting a place in the Excise, or that Cowper would have been a happier man had he lived upon a pension.

Pitt was ready with those retorts in conversation which are the marks of a quick and lively wit. Every one has heard of the colonel of volunteers who repeatedly insisted as a condition of his offer of service, "Mind, we are not to go out of the country, Mr. Pitt! we are not to go out of the country." "Except, I suppose," said the Minister, coldly, "in the case of actual invasion." The Duchess of

Gordon, upon her return to London, said to the Minister: "Have you been talking as much nonsense as usual, Mr. Pitt?" "I am not sure about that," he replied, "but I think that since I last saw your grace, I have not heard so much."

A translation which Lord Harrowby repeated to me, and which has been published by the Editor of Mr. Rogers's "Reminiscences" shows his command of the English language. Some one mentioned a sentence in the Essay "De Oratore," attributed to Tacitus:* "Magna eloquentia, sicut flamma, materiâ aliter et motibus excitatur, et urendo clarescit." One of the company said it was untranslateable. "By no means," said Pitt, and at once proceeded: "It is of eloquence as of a flame; it requires matter to feed it, motion to excite it, and it brightens as it burns." The best way to test the merit of this translation is to compare it with that of Murphy: "The true spirit of eloquence, like an intense fire, is kept alive by fresh materials; every new commotion gives it vigour, and in proportion as it burns, it expands and brightens to a purer flame."†

Here, indeed, is a flame which is quite buried under the heavy materials which Mr. Murphy has heaped upon it. In the mouth of Pitt, the English language attained all the force and precision of which it is capable. It is said that Fox, in speaking of his oratory, observed: "I never want a word, but Mr. Pitt always has at command the right word."

An instance may be given of this *curiosa felicitas*. When replying to a motion of Fox, which had been weakly seconded by Erskine, Pitt said: "The hon. and learned gentleman

* "De Oratore," s. 36.

† Murphy's Translation of Tacitus, vol. iv. p. 171.

who seconded the right hon. gentleman, *attenuating* the thread of his discourse," &c.

In eloquence, as an orator, he was probably superior to his father, Lord Chatham; in wisdom, as a statesman, far inferior.

CHAPTER LXIX.

FOX'S CONDUCT IN PITT'S LAST ILLNESS.—NEW MINISTRY.—THE ILLNESS AND DEATH OF FOX.

Fox had never felt personal enmity to Pitt. In his familiar letters, he was wont to pour out his thoughts hastily; hence they often contain passages and phrases which are inconsistent with his more matured expressions, and with his deliberate acts. Thus, although he often wrote to his nephew as if his rival were devoid of high and noble feelings, his willingness to place the best of his party under the guidance of Pitt, as his colleagues and subordinates, shows that he justly estimated the patriotism and integrity of that great man.

But, on the death of Pitt, Fox, although willing to forget all animosity, could hardly agree to vote for a monument which his admirers insisted should be erected to the memory of the late Minister. He spoke, on this occasion, with good taste, and, what is more, with good feeling. "If," he said, "the mark of public respect were such as did not compromise my public duty in the compliance, no person would join in it more cheerfully and eagerly than I would. But it is a different thing to be called upon to confer honours upon Mr. Pitt as an 'excellent statesman.' It cannot be expected that I should so far forget the principles I have uniformly professed

as to subscribe to the condemnation of those principles by agreeing to the motion before the House."

The motion was carried by 258 votes against 89; such being the majority of the House of Commons which considered Pitt "an excellent statesman." His remaining colleagues, however, were by no means so confident of their talents and influence as to imagine they could carry on the Government. Although invited by the King to do so, they assembled only to confess their inability to undertake so great a task. Lord Hawkesbury, however, obtained the sinecure of Warden of the Cinque Ports, with a salary of 4000*l.* a year, which had been held by Pitt. When Lord Hawkesbury and his colleagues declined the King's offer, the King sent for Lord Grenville, and entrusted him with the task of forming an Administration. Lord Grenville said that the first person he should consult would be Fox. The King replied: "I understand it to be so, and I meant it to be so."

In the new Ministry, Lord Grenville held the office of First Lord of the Treasury, and Lord Henry Petty that of Chancellor of the Exchequer. Fox became Foreign Secretary and Leader of the House of Commons; Mr. Grey, First Lord of the Admiralty; Lord Spencer, Home Secretary; Mr. Windham, Secretary of State for War and Colonies; Lord Fitzwilliam, President of the Council. Mr. Sheridan was made Treasurer of the Navy, in place of Mr. Canning; and General Fitzpatrick, Secretary at War.

Fox, who had been ready to join with Addington when he left Pitt, had urged his entrance into the Cabinet. It would have been far better to have made no overtures to Lord Sidmouth. He was a known enemy to the Catholic claims, and was sure to leave the Ministry if anything were

proposed in their favour. Mr. Canning said: "The Doctor is like the measles—everybody has him once." Lord Sidmouth wished to bring Lord Buckinghamshire with him, but Fox refused his consent. He agreed, however, to admit Lord Ellenborough to sit in the Cabinet. This nomination was unfortunate. It had been intended to give Lord Ellenborough the Great Seal, and to make Erskine Chief Justice—an arrangement which would have given great satisfaction to the public, to whom Erskine's brilliant eloquence and thorough knowledge of the practice of the common law were sufficiently known. But Lord Ellenborough refused the Great Seal; it was given to Erskine, and Lord Chief Justice Ellenborough joined the Cabinet. Fox said he had never had a case more easy to defend than this appointment of Ellenborough. It is true that in theory the Chief Judge in the Common Law Courts is no more an unfit member of a Cabinet than the Chief Judge in the Courts of Equity. Indeed, criminal prosecutions are less connected in general with party interests than suits in Chancery. But the public were used to the one arrangement, and not to the other. It is true, also, that Lord Mansfield was for many years (from 1759 to 1763) at once Chief Justice and a member of the Cabinet Council. But the fact was little known, and the public had grown, in 1806, far more critical; so that the admission of Lord Ellenborough was a mistake which ought to have been avoided. The question was brought on on the 3rd of March, by Mr. Spencer Stanhope, and, after an able speech from Fox, the House divided.

For Ministers	222
Against	64
Majority	158

There were three questions upon which Fox felt great anxiety. These were, the Catholic question, the question of peace with France, and the question of the slave trade. The ground taken by Fox on the Catholic question was that, for the sake of the question itself, it was desirable not to present the petition in the current year. He thought that, if it were supported by him, as it certainly must have been, the fall of the Ministry and the formation of an avowed anti-Catholic Ministry might follow. His views on this subject are clearly explained in a letter to Mr. Ryan, an extract from which I here insert:

"With respect to the question you put about the presentation of a Catholic petition this year, I have consulted with our friends, who all agree in thinking that, for the interest of the cause, such a measure ought to be deferred to another Session. Measures are actually taking, by the removal of Lord Redesdale, Mr. Foster, and others, to show the good intentions of the Ministry towards your body. Steps still more important will be taken to manifest our disposition: by doing for the Catholics all that is consistent with existing bad laws, by giving them in substance what they have now only in words—a right to be in the army, to be corporators, &c., &c.; by a change of Justices of the Peace, whose conduct has been notoriously oppressive—I hope, too, by some arrangement about tithes; and, in fine, by giving you all the share in the government of your country that we can give. The effect of these measures will be partly to make the Catholics of the lower orders more (contented), partly to enable them to come with additional weight and strength when they again assert their claims. I therefore strongly recommend suspending the petition for a time. If, however, it should, notwithstanding our wishes,

be presented, I will support it with all my power; but the divisions of last year, and the opinions which have been industriously propagated in this country, make me despair of success, unless we could have *active assistance* from a quarter in which to look for passive acquiescence is perhaps more than we can reasonably expect. If we are beat, which we certainly shall be, and if the fall of our Ministry should follow, which may be the case, you run the risk of a Ministry being formed on the avowed principle of defeating your claims, and you thus would put all hope further off than ever.

"I am, with great regard,
"Dear Sir,
"Ever yours,
"C. J. Fox."*

Had the Catholic petition been presented in both Houses, it is clear that both Fox and Lord Grenville would have supported its prayer. It is uncertain how George III. would have borne such conduct on the part of his Ministers, but it is clear the motions would have been defeated, and, for the interests of the Catholics, the course pointed out by Fox seems to have been the best. Had he lived till the Regency, it is probable that the Catholic claims would have been granted.

The advantages which would have been derived from the admission of Roman Catholics to the Legislature and to office before the termination of the war, and before the threats, both loud and deep, which were uttered in Ireland in the year 1828, would have been great and solid benefits. A concession in 1812 would probably have been as fertile in

* "Memoirs of the Whig Party," vol. i. p. 214.

loyalty and gratitude on the part of the Catholic body as the concession proposed by Pitt in 1800.

In 1828, the concession was made to menace, and was followed by a dangerous agitation for the repeal of the Union.

The question of peace was ever uppermost in the mind of Fox. But, at the end of 1805, he almost despaired. Writing to Lord Holland, he says, "As to *pacific language*, which is your phrase, I own I doubt very much whether this is a time, even for us, (exclusive of new friends,) to hold out that there is much chance of obtaining any tolerable peace just now."* Yet an opening which occurred soon after he came into office induced him again to think it possible to conclude peace with France.

The negotiations began in this manner: On the 20th of February, Fox wrote to M. de Talleyrand that a strange circumstance had occurred, which he thought it his duty, as a man of honour, to communicate; and he therefore proceeded to relate the fact just as it had happened: "Some days ago, a person I did not know announced to me that he had just disembarked at Gravesend without a passport, and he asked me to send him one, as he came recently from Paris and had things to tell me which would give me pleasure. I conversed with him quite alone in my room, when, after some discourse of little consequence, this scoundrel had the audacity to tell me that, in order to tranquillize all crowned heads, it was necessary to put to death the head of the French nation, and that for this purpose a house had been hired at Passy, where, without risk, and with certainty, this detestable project might be executed. . . . I am not ashamed to own to you, who know me, that my confusion was extreme at finding myself in conversation with an avowed assassin. In conse-

* "Correspondence," vol. iv. p. 124.

quence of this confusion, I ordered him instantly to leave the room, giving instructions at the same time to the police officer who guarded him to make him leave the kingdom as soon as possible. After having reflected more calmly on what I had done, I perceived the fault I had committed, in letting him go before I had informed you, and I had him detained. . . . Our laws do not permit us to detain him long, but he will not leave the kingdom before you will have had time to take precautions. . . . He called himself Guillot de la Gervillière, but I think this must be an assumed name. He had not a scrap of paper to show me, and at first I did him the honour to take him for a spy."

To this letter, M. de Talleyrand replied in the following terms:

"SIR,—I have placed your excellency's letter in the hands of his Majesty. His first words after reading it were: 'I recognise here the principles of honour and virtue which have always distinguished Mr. Fox.' He added: 'Thank him on my behalf, and tell him that, whether the policy of his Sovereign obliges us to remain long at war with each other, or whether a contest so needless to humanity is destined to end at as early a period as the two nations ought to wish, I rejoice at the altered character which by this step the war has already assumed, and which is the presage of what one may expect from a Cabinet whose principles I am glad to estimate by those of Mr. Fox—one of the men best fitted to appreciate what is noble and what is truly great.' I will not permit myself, sir, to add anything to the expressions of his Imperial and Royal Majesty."

In another letter, Prince Talleyrand sent to Fox an abstract of the Emperor's speech, which was favourable to pacific overtures. In reply, Fox, in a letter of the 26th of March, expressed a wish for a negotiation for peace, but

said that England could not neglect the interests of her Allies; that she found herself united with Russia by engagements so strict that she could not treat, much less conclude anything, but in concert with the Emperor Alexander. They might, however, arrange provisionally some of the principal points. He added that the English nation was that which suffered least from the war, but they felt for the ills which afflicted other countries.

M. de Talleyrand's answer was, to all appearance, most friendly and pacific. He said that France desired none of the possessions of England; that England might remain mistress of the sea, and France would have to deal as well as she could with Continental nations equal to her in the number of their armies and in resources. This, however, was but a covert way of excluding England from the Continent, and this purpose Fox at once perceived. It was in vain, therefore, that M. de Talleyrand displayed all the subtleties and artifices of his renowned diplomatic skill to conceal the real point of the question. Fox again stated, that we were bound to Russia by treaty, and that we must either treat together with her or provisionally, with a view to her entering at a later period into the negotiation. On the other points, Fox at once agreed with M. de Talleyrand.

The Emperor had pretended that England wished to interfere in the internal affairs of France, and to dictate to her a Treaty of Commerce prejudicial to French industry. To these remarks, Fox replies: "If what your excellency says respecting domestic affairs relates to political affairs, an answer is scarcely requisite. We do not interfere in such concerns in time of war—much less shall we do so in time of peace; and nothing can be further from the ideas which prevail here than any wish either to interfere with

respect to the internal regulations which you may judge proper for the management of your Customs duties and the support of your commercial rights, or to offer insult to your flag. As to a Treaty of Commerce, England supposes that she has no greater interest in desiring it than other nations. There are many who think that such a treaty between Great Britain and France would be equally beneficial to the two contracting parties; but this is a question upon which each Government must decide according to its own ideas, and the party rejecting it gives no offence, and is in no way responsible to the party proposing it."

M. de Talleyrand had professed the strongest opinion on the part of the Emperor in favour of the integrity and absolute independence of the Ottoman Empire. On this point, Fox replies: "As to what relates to the integrity and independence of the Ottoman Empire, no difficulty can present itself, these objects being equally clear to all the parties interested in the present discussion."*

In this plain and straightforward language, M. de Talleyrand could find no scope for his ingenuity; and for a time it seemed as if the negotiation would split upon this rock.

In a letter to the Duke of Bedford, of April the 26th, Fox says: "All negotiation with France is now, I understand, at an end. We insisted on negotiating jointly with Russia; they on a separate negotiation. The difference between us, therefore, is plain and intelligible, but nothing of this ought *yet* to be mentioned publicly. You will be happy to hear that it occasioned no difference, or even shade of difference, in the Cabinet."†

Napoleon, however, gave way; and upon a promise on his

* "Papers presented to Parliament," 1806. "Parliamentary Debates," vol. viii. p. 92. See also State Papers published by the Government of France.

† "Correspondence," vol. iv. p. 136.

part that the interests of the King's Allies should be fully considered, Lord Yarmouth was entrusted with full powers.

Lord Yarmouth, who was anxious to make peace, produced his full powers prematurely; upon which, Lord Lauderdale was sent to Paris, with Dugald Stewart as his Secretary. M. de Talleyrand was not well pleased with these appointments, and said to his friends: "On nous envoie un ambassadeur Jacobin avec un sécrétaire philosophe."

The difficulty, however, lay not in these appointments, but in the grasping and devouring ambition of Napoleon.

Fox, who blamed Lord Yarmouth for producing his full powers, as an act likely to encourage the exorbitant pretensions of the Emperor of the French, found his foresight justified. Napoleon insisted not only on retaining Naples, but on adding Sicily to the vassal kingdom he had set up. Then Fox, in speaking to his nephew, Lord Holland, who had imagined that an equivalent might be found for the King of the Two Sicilies in Sardinia or South America, said: "No, no; bad as the Queen and Court of Naples are, we can, in honour, do nothing without their full and *bonâ fide* consent; but even exclusive of that consideration, and of the great importance of Sicily, which you, young one, very much underrate, it is not so much the value of the point in dispute as the manner in which the French fly from their word that disheartens me. It is not Sicily, but the shuffling insincere way in which they act, that shows me they are playing a false game; and in that case it would be very imprudent to make any concessions which by possibility could be thought inconsistent with our honour, or could furnish our Allies with a plausible pretence for suspecting, reproaching, or deserting us."

While Fox's mind was thus firm and unshaken, his body

was yielding to the inroads of disease. He had, from his first entrance into the Ministry, conceived a plan for transferring the Foreign Office to his nephew, Lord Holland, and remaining in the Cabinet without office. He spoke of this plan with his usual complacency, benevolence, and affection. When he found his illness more serious than he had supposed, he said to his nephew: "If this continues—and though I don't fear any immediate danger, I begin to see it is a longer and more serious matter than I apprehended—I must have more quiet than with my place I ought to have, and put the plan I spoke to you about sooner in execution than I intended. But don't think me selfish, young one; the slave trade and peace are two such glorious things, I can't give them up, even to you. If I can manage *them*, I will then retire."*

But such plans were not destined to be realized. His anxiety for the abolition of the slave trade induced him to continue his attendance in Parliament longer than the advice of his friends or even his own judgment approved. But the triumph was not to be his.

In 1804, he had gone to Cheltenham for the benefit of the waters.† No one suspected at that time that he had any serious malady. Lord Lauderdale, whose father had died of dropsy, was the first person who called the attention of Fox's friends to the swelling of his legs and the falling-off about his neck and chest. Dr. Vaughan (afterwards Sir Henry Halford) and Mr. Hawkins, the surgeon, were called in soon after, and pronounced the disease to be dropsy. Mrs. Fox became alarmed. Yet, as I have said, although the House of Commons fatigued him, he was so anxious on the subject of the

* "Memoirs of the Whig Party," vol. i. p. 249.

† Being at that time with my father at Cheltenham, I had the opportunity of making such acquaintance with him as a boy can make with a statesman.

slave trade that he would not discontinue his attendance. In June, his illness increased, and after a time, he left off attending public business, and Mr. Grey framed the answers to Lord Lauderdale's despatches.

The water in his legs becoming troublesome, he was relieved by tapping. After the puncture had been made, he desired Lord Holland to come into the room, and conversed cheerfully during the operation. He became after this time very weak and drowsy, but he liked to be read to, and Lord Holland and his sister, Miss Fox, performed this task. He desired Lord Holland to inform him when there was any danger. He said: "We are neither of us children, and it would be ridiculous to conceal anything." He gave directions where to find his will. The situation and feelings of Mrs. Fox seemed to be the chief, and, indeed, the only occupation of his mind when his will was brought to him, and whenever he spoke of the probability of his disease terminating fatally. He could speak of nothing regarding her without strong and sensible emotion. He gave directions concerning a provision for her after his death. He had hardly finished what he had got to say upon this subject, when he broke off and abruptly said: "Now change the subject, or read me the Eighth Book of Virgil." Lord Holland did so, and thus records his recollections: "He made me read the finest verses twice over, spoke of their merits and compared them with passages in other parts with all his usual acuteness, taste, memory and vivacity."

Mr. Trotter, who had been for a time his private secretary, arrived from Ireland just before his illness assumed a formidable shape.

For some days after the operation of tapping, he seemed to revive. He took one or two airings, and in a few days he

was removed to Chiswick. "The weather was fine, and the garden through which he was wheeled, and the pictures, and large apartments of that magnificent villa, seemed to refresh his spirits. A remark of Bacon, quoted in the 'Spectator,' that poetry, sculpture, painting, and all the arts of imitation, relieve and soothe the mind in sickness, while other occupations fatigue and harass, struck him exceedingly. He applied it, no doubt, to his own situation, and after some reflection, he observed that he could not see the reason, but acknowledged the truth, of it. He found the employment of the mind in the contemplation of a landscape or the perusal of a poem refreshing; and all other exertion in business, private or public, irksome."*

On the morning of the 7th of September, he grew much worse, and Mrs. Fox sent for Lord Holland to Chiswick, which he did not quit till Fox's death. With his mind full of his wife's situation, he said to his nephew: "You have done quite right; you will not forget poor Liz. What will become of her?"

Lord Holland, having already twice warned his uncle of his danger, wished now to keep up his spirits. Thus he remarked: "In spite of what I then said to you, '*dabit Deus his quoque finem.*'" "Aye," said Fox, with a smile; "but '*finem*,' young one, may have two senses."†

The persons who were staying with him in the house, or visiting him frequently, were, Mrs. Fox, Miss Fox, Miss Willoughby, Lady Holland, General Fitzpatrick, Lord Robert Spencer, Lord Fitzwilliam, Lord John Townshend, and his medical attendants, Dr. Moseley and Mr. Hawkins. Mr. Trotter read to him at night—often, he relates, till three in the morning. He read Virgil, Dryden, and Johnson's

* "Memoirs of Whig Party," vol. i. p. 266. † Ibid. p. 268.

"Lives of the Poets." When Mr. Trotter, in reading, criticised Johnson, Fox always took his part. In early life, he had defended the grant of a pension to Johnson in the House of Commons, and Johnson always gratefully remembered the part he then took. In the height of the clamour against the Coalition, Dr. Johnson had said: "I am for the King against Fox; but I am for Fox against Pitt."

Fox's defence of Johnson at this time shows that the kindly feeling between the great Tory philosopher and the fervid Whig orator ceased only with life.

Lord Holland read to his uncle, during this last illness, a manuscript of the "Parish Register" of Crabbe. Some parts Fox made him read twice. He remarked several passages as exquisitely beautiful, and objected to some few, which Crabbe, on hearing his objections, altered before publication. He said more than once that it was a very pretty poem; that Crabbe's condition in the world had improved since he wrote "The Village," and his view of life and mankind had improved likewise. He was particularly struck with the description of the substantial happiness of the farmer's wife. It is singular that Crabbe's poetry should have been corrected by Johnson, praised by Burke, and have occupied the minds of Fox and Walter Scott when they were dying.*

After the conversation with Lord Holland which I have related a page or two back, the termination approached rapidly. Mrs. Fox, who had a strong sense of religion, wished to have prayers read at his bedside. At her desire, Mr. Bouverie, a sensible and friendly clergyman, stood behind the curtain, and in an audible voice read the prayers of the Church. Fox remained unusually quiet. Towards

* "Life of Sir Walter Scott," by Lockhart.

the end of the prayers, Mrs. Fox knelt on the bed, and joined his hands, which he seemed faintly to close with a smile of ineffable goodness. "Whatever it betokened," says Lord Holland, "it was a smile of serenity and goodness such as would have proceeded at that moment only from a disinterested and benevolent heart—from a being loved and beloved by all that approached him."

During the whole of the 13th of September, his state was manifestly hopeless. The last words which he uttered with any distinctness were, "I die happy," and "Liz" (the name by which he always called his wife).

About six o'clock in the evening of the 13th of September, he expired without a groan, and with a serene and placid countenance, "which seemed," says Lord Holland, "even after death to represent the benevolent spirit which had animated it."

"If," continues Lord Holland, "a consciousness of being beloved and almost adored by all who approached him could administer consolation in the hour of death, no man could with more reason or propriety have closed his career with the exclamation of 'I die happy,' for no man ever deserved or obtained that consolation more certainly than Mr. Fox."*

* "Memoirs of Whig Party," vol. i. p. 273.

CHAPTER LXX.

CHARACTER OF FOX.—SKETCH OF HISTORY OF EUROPE TILL 1814.

UPON hearing of the death of Fox, the King said to his daughter, the Princess Mary, afterwards Duchess of Gloucester: "I never thought I should have regretted the death of Mr. Fox so much as I do."*

In bringing this work to a close, it has appeared to me not out of place to delineate some traits of Fox's character as a man, an orator, and a statesman, and to notice very briefly the termination of that struggle with France in the course of which his voice had been so often heard.

Charles James Fox was born on the 24th of January, 1749. At an early age, his mother described him as "dreadfully passionate." When he was between nine and ten, he went to Eton, and remained there six years. Soon after he had entered the sixth form, he was taken away and sent to Oxford. He was very much spoilt by his father, who indulged all his inclinations. Nevertheless, he studied hard at Oxford, and says of himself when there: "I did not expect my life would be so pleasant as I find it; but I really think, to a man who reads a great deal, there cannot be a more agreeable place." Of mathematics he says: "I believe they are useful, and I am sure they are entertain-

* The late Duchess of Gloucester assured me of this fact.

ing." When he was yet young, Lord Mansfield said of him, as it is reported: "That is Charles Fox, old Henry Fox's son, with twice his parts, and half his sagacity." When he came into the world, having strong passions and an over-indulgent father, who laughed at his scruples and his shame, he fell into a course of gambling, extravagance, and licentiousness, ever to be deplored, injurious to his moral character, and seriously impairing his reputation with the public. Thus, when, in 1774, being then twenty-five years of age, Lord North turned him out of office, and he adopted the politics of Opposition, the country gave him little credit for patriotism or love of liberty. Yet his character was gradually forming; he was learning, as he said afterwards on a memorable occasion, more from Burke than he had ever learnt from books, and his quickness of intellect and warmth of heart soon induced him to adopt just and large views with respect to the American War.

Fox's nature fitted him for a quiet and easy mode of life. He was without envy or malignity; he loved the most simple pleasures; he was kind to every one. Upon the subject of religion, the only direct testimony I find is a paragraph in the "Memoirs of Mr. Trotter," who bears this testimony: "I recollect being present at a conversation in Stable Yard, when Mr. Robertson* and, I think, Lord Grey were in the room, when the immortality of the soul was touched upon. Mr. Fox, then very ill, spoke upon it with that seriousness and earnestness for demonstration which marked him on all weighty subjects. I perceived no disposition to express any arrogant doubts, but, on the contrary, that humble and modest tone which, upon so awful a topic,

* Mr. Trotter says Robertson, but it was, perhaps, Mr. Rollerton, then in the Foreign Office.

becomes all men."* In another passage, Mr. Trotter says: "He never meddled with abstruse and mysterious points in religion. In death, he resigned himself to his Creator with unparalleled calmness and magnanimity."†

As an orator, Fox was, as Burke says, "the most brilliant and accomplished debater that the world ever saw." "He declaimed argument," says Horace Walpole. The testimony of some of the most eminent men who frequently heard Fox speak in Parliament will give us the best idea that can now be formed of the character of his eloquence. Lord Erskine, for instance, after saying that to ask his opinion of the nature and character of Fox's eloquence is, in other words, to ask him what is the nature and practical character of eloquence itself when applied to the transactions of British government and law, thus proceeds: "This extraordinary person, then, in rising generally to speak, had evidently no more premeditated the particular language he should employ, nor frequently the illustrations and images by which he should discuss and enforce his subject, than he had contemplated the hour he was to die; and his exalted merit as a debater in Parliament did not, therefore, consist in the length, variety, or roundness of his periods, but in the truth and vigour of his conceptions; in the depth and extent of his information; in the retentive powers of his memory, which enabled him to keep in constant view not only all he had formerly read and reflected on, but everything said at the moment, and even at other times, by the various persons whose arguments he was to answer; in the faculty of spreading out his matter so clearly to the grasp of his own mind as to render it impossible he should ever fail in the utmost clearness and distinctness to others; in the exuberant

* "Memoirs of Fox," p. 470. † Ibid. 471.

fertility of his invention, which spontaneously brought forth his ideas at the moment in every possible shape, by which the understanding might sit in the most accurate judgment upon them; whilst, instead of seeking afterwards to enforce them by cold premeditated illustrations or by episodes which, however beautiful, only distract attention, he was accustomed to repass his subject, not methodically, but in the most unforeseen and fascinating review, enlightening every part of it, and binding even his adversaries in a kind of spell, for the moment, of involuntary assent. The reader must certainly not expect to be so carried away by the sketches now before me. Short-hand alone, secured, too, at the moment, against the numerous imperfections inseparable from following the career of so rapid and vehement an elocution, could have perpetuated their lustre and effect; but still the correct, and often the animated, substance remains, which preserves from oblivion more that is worthy of preservation than by such means would apply to almost any other speaker in the world. Eloquence, which consists more in the dexterous structure of periods, and in the powers and harmony of delivery, than in the extraordinary vigour of the understanding, may be compared to a human body, not so much surpassing the dimensions of ordinary nature, as remarkable for the beauty and symmetry of its parts. If the short-hand writer, like the statuary or painter, has made no memorial of such an orator, little is left to distinguish him, but, in the most imperfect relics of Fox's speeches, *the bones of a giant are to be discovered.* This will be found more particularly to apply to his speeches upon sudden and unforeseen occasions, when certainly nothing could be more interesting nor extraordinary than to witness, as I have often done, the mighty and unprepared efforts of his mind, when he had to

encounter with the arguments of some profound reasoner, who had deeply considered his subject, and arranged it with all possible art, to preserve its parts unbroken.* To hear him begin on such occasions, without method, without any kind of exertion, without the smallest impulse from the desire of distinction or triumph, and animated only by the honest sense of duty, an audience who knew him not would have expected but little success from the conflict: as little as a traveller in the East, whilst trembling at a buffalo in the wild vigour of his well-protected strength, would have looked to his immediate destruction when he saw the boa moving slowly and inertly towards him on the grass. But Fox, unlike the serpent in everything but his strength, always taking his station in some fixed invulnerable principle, soon surrounded and entangled his adversary, disjointing every member of his discourse, and strangling him in the irresistible folds of truth."† Sir James Mackintosh, who had also frequently heard him, says of him: "He disliked political conversation, and never willingly took any part in it. To speak of him justly as an orator would require a long essay. Everywhere natural, he carried into public something of that simple and negligent exterior which belonged to him in private. When he began to speak, a common observer might have thought him awkward, and even a consummate judge could only have been struck with the exquisite justness of his ideas, and the transparent simplicity of his manners; but no sooner had he spoken for some time than he was changed into another being. He forgot himself and everything around him; he thought only of his subject. His genius warmed and kindled

* This probably alludes to a great speech of Sir W. Grant, to which Fox replied at the moment with wonderful effect.

† "Fox's Speeches," vol. i. p. xiii.

as he went on; he darted fire into his audience; torrents of impetuous and irresistible eloquence swept along their feelings and convictions. He certainly possessed, above all moderns, that union of reason, simplicity, and vehemence which formed the prince of orators. He was the most Demosthenean speaker since Demosthenes." * Lord Brougham has criticised this comparison of Fox to Demosthenes, and in some respects with justice. For while Fox, in the simplicity and vehemence of his reasoning, might bear comparison with Demosthenes, his speeches as a whole show more distinctly perhaps than those of any other speaker the difference between Greek and British oratory. A speech of Demosthenes resembles a beautiful Greek temple; it is composed of reasoning, of elegant diction, of appeals to the patriotism and public spirit of his hearers, all of the same pure material. We admire the purity, the harmony, the unity and grace of the structure. A speech of Fox resembles rather a cathedral of Gothic architecture. The strength of the buttresses, the grandeur of the arches, the painted glass, the fretted aisles, the multiplied and fanciful ornaments, fill the mind with admiration and delight. Take, for instance, the great speech on the rupture of the peace of Amiens. The general doctrines on the right of interposition against an overbearing power, and the examples of Switzerland and Holland, might well have found their counterpart in a speech of Demosthenes against Philip; but when we come to the illustrations—Muley Muloch in his scarlet robe, Almanzor in a play of Dryden, and the various allusions to classical literature, and to Demosthenes himself —we see how great is the distance between the finished performance of the Greek orator and the vast and various

* "Characters of Fox," vol. i. p. 162.

topics of the British statesman. Fox was rapid in his delivery, raising his voice, at times almost screaming, in his emotion, but still pressing his argument, and keeping in view his object. Pitt used to say that, when he thought that he had himself done better than usual, he found Fox in reply surpass his ordinary vigour, and exceed the best of his former efforts. Wilberforce is reported to have declared himself always convinced for the moment by Pitt or by Fox, and inclined to give the palm to that one of these two orators who had last spoken. Fox, with great powers, had likewise great defects; his action was ungraceful, and he frequently recurred to a topic on which he had already dwelt. He said himself that the best rule for a young speaker was contained in some lines of the "Odyssey" which Homer has put into the mouth of Minerva. This is the passage in the Third Book of the "Odyssey" to which he referred:

Τὴν δ' αὖ Τηλέμαχος πεπνυμένος ἀντίον ηὔδα.
" Μέντορ, πῶς τ' ἄρ' ἴω, πῶς τ' ἂρ προσπτύξομαι αὐτόν;
Οὐδέ τί πω μύθοισι πεπείρημαι πυκινοῖσι·
Αἰδὼς δ' αὖ νέον ἄνδρα γεραίτερον ἐξερέεσθαι."
Τὸν δ' αὖτε προσέειπε θεὰ γλαυκῶπις Ἀθήνη.
" Τηλέμαχ', ἄλλα μὲν αὐτὸς ἐνὶ φρεσὶ σῇσι νοήσεις,
Ἄλλα δὲ καὶ δαίμων ὑποθήσεται."

To whom Telemachus discreet replied:
" Ah, Mentor, how can I admire, how greet,
A chief like him, unpractised as I am
In manaǵed phrase? Shame bids the youth beware
How he accosts the man of many years."

But him the Goddess answer'd, azure-eyed:
" Telemachus, thou wilt in part thyself
Fit speech devise, and Heav'n will give the rest."

COWPER'S "ODYSSEY," B. III. v. xxxii.

Of Fox's character as a statesman, we must now speak.

While very young, he was disposed to adopt in the House of Commons those defects of roughness and insolence which had done so much injury to his father in public estimation. His early dismissal from office by Lord North led him to revise his politics; he early placed himself under the tuition of Burke, and learnt the lessons of true Whiggism. Lord Chatham had more than once declared that the resistance of America was founded on Whig principles. "This resistance to your arbitrary system of taxation," he said, "might have been foreseen. It was obvious from the nature of things, and of mankind; above all, from the Whiggish spirit flourishing in that country."* In a subsequent speech, Lord Chatham said: "The glorious spirit of Whiggism animates three millions in America, who prefer poverty with liberty to gilded chains and sordid affluence, and who will die in defence of their rights as freemen. What shall oppose this spirit, aided by the congenial flame glowing in the breast of every Whig in England?" &c.†

The Whig party at this time was the party of Lord Rockingham, and Fox infused into that party a vigour and energy which they had until that time never known.

In February, 1775, he moved an amendment to an address of Lord North, and, according to the testimony of Gibbon, "taking the vast compass of the question before us, discovered powers for regular debate which neither his friends hoped nor his enemies dreaded."‡ At the opening of the Session, in October, 1776, he supported a motion of Lord John Cavendish which aimed at putting an end to the war in America. But, on the 10th of April, 1778, going further in his views of concession, he supported a motion of Mr. Powys

* "Chatham Correspondence," vol. iv. p. 382. † Ibid. 401.

‡ Miscellaneous Works, vol. i. p. 489.

for empowering commissioners to treat on the basis of the independence of America. In supporting this motion, he declared that he thought it impossible from our situation as well as from the nature of the object for us ever to regain the dependency of America. He stated broadly that, in his opinion, we should probably secure a greater portion of the trade of America by a perpetual alliance than by a nominal dependence.

In the summer of this year (1778), he received an overture from Lord North which would have opened the way to the independence of America. Lord North, together with Lords Suffolk, Dartmouth, Sandwich, and Gower, with, perhaps, some others, were ready to retire. Lord Weymouth was proposed as the head of the Treasury; Mr. Thurlow to be Chancellor; Lord Rockingham, with the Duke of Richmond, Fox, Lord John Cavendish, or, if Lord Rockingham desired it, Lord Shelburne, Lord Camden, and the Duke of Grafton, to fill the vacant offices. The troops were to be withdrawn from North America. It is clear that if this proposal had been accepted, offensive war on the Continent of North America would have ceased in 1778, and the vote of the House of Commons of 1782 would have been unnecessary. Writing in support of this proposal to Lord Rockingham, Fox says: "The very circumstance which, in your opinion, would have rendered the arrangement weak, I considered means of strength and stability, because it has always been, and, I believe, always will be, that power, whether over a people or a king, gained by gentle means, by the goodwill of the person to be governed, and, above all, by degrees, rather than by a sudden exertion of strength, is in its nature more durable and firm than any advantage that can be gained by contrary means." It is singular that

Fox should have held this opinion in 1778 and so greatly have departed from it in 1783, and that the Duke of Richmond, who controverted this opinion in 1778, should have adopted it in 1783. Lord Weymouth was personally agreeable to the King. He was in favour of stopping the American War in 1778, and is said to have been against interfering in the internal concerns of France in 1793.

Nothing could be more injurious to the Whig party, nothing more fatal to the character, the power, and the reputation of Fox himself, than the ominous Coalition. If it is true that Lord North, the Prime Minister of the American War, had not that odious and contemptible character which had been attributed to him by Fox in his speeches, it was no less the truth that he was a sincere Tory in principle, and had shown himself in office to be a weak and incapable Minister. The immediate purpose of the Coalition—namely, the censure of the peace which Lord Shelburne had concluded with France and with America—was almost worse than the Coalition itself. The great object of national interest at that time was to recognise the independence of America, and to break up the alliance between France, Spain, and the United States. This Lord Shelburne had accomplished.

When the American War was put a stop to by the vote of the House of Commons, those who had been the opponents of that ruinous war should have been the Ministers—that is to say, Lord Rockingham, Lord Shelburne, the Dukes of Richmond and Portland, Lord Camden, Burke, Fox, Pitt, and Sheridan, should have been in office; and Lord North, Lord Gower, Mr. Dundas, and Lord Stormont in Opposition. Unfortunately, the dissensions of the Whigs and the fatal Coalition broke up these natural alliances.

Lord North and Lord Stormont acted with Fox; Lord Gower and Mr. Dundas with Pitt. Thus, while Fox bore all the odium of joining Lord North, the principles of the Tory party which led to that war were represented by Lord Gower and Mr. Dundas, and animated the victorious Ministry of Pitt. On questions of Parliamentary Reform and Abolition of Slave Trade, the colleagues of Pitt led a triumphant majority, even against Pitt himself; and on questions of the repeal of intolerant laws, the Administration was purely Tory.

The India Bill, though not a bad measure in itself, bore on its front the character of a design to subject the Crown to a party, which was fatal to its success. Had the Whigs been represented by Lord Shelburne as Prime Minister, with Fox as Secretary for Foreign Affairs and Leader of the House of Commons, and Pitt as Chancellor of the Exchequer, a general election must have confirmed their power. A general election in 1784 destroyed the Coalition.

Fox's opposition to the Commercial Treaty with France of 1786 was unwise; his resistance to the Regency Bill of 1788 was rash, intemperate, and unbecoming. He adopted too readily on that occasion the violent language of Burke.

But these errors and many others were infinitely outweighed by Fox's resolute and persevering resistance to the war of 1793, which deluged Europe with blood, and obstructed all liberal progress for nearly forty years.

In a former part of this work, I have given at some length the arguments for and against the war of 1793.*

It is unnecessary to repeat these arguments. But it may be useful to state in precise terms the policy recommended by Fox.

The French nation, in attempting to change a pure des-

* Vol. ii. c. 32, p. 290.

potism into a constitutional monarchy, had lost their road. Their King, with the best intentions, had helped them to go astray. He had been wanting both in wisdom and in good faith. He had encouraged the American Revolution, and when La Fayette returned to Paris, vehement for liberty, and equality, and the rights of man, the Queen of France had gone out to meet him and brought him back to Paris in her own carriage. The Court having fanned the flame, the Revolution made progress, and then the Court, instead of confiding to Mirabeau the formation of a Ministry, had sought, by buying him and other popular leaders, to induce them to betray in private the cause they supported in public. When these measures, marked with duplicity and folly, utterly failed, the King attempted to leave France, to disavow his acts, and to throw himself on the support of foreign Powers.

This conduct exasperated the French people, and drove them into a state of frenzy, of which suspicion against every party and a furious thirst for blood were the chief symptoms.

It was at this moment, when calmness and prudence were above all things required, that the Continental Powers sent an army to invade France, threatening the National Guards with the punishment of death as rebels if they attempted to defend their country against foreign troops, and declaring that all the members of the National Assembly, of the Departments, of the Municipalities, and others whom it might concern, should be personally responsible to their Imperial and Royal Majesties for all events that might occur, on pain of losing their heads by sentence of court-martial.

A more atrocious case of interference in the internal concerns of a foreign nation has never occurred. A greater calamity than the success of such interference cannot well be conceived. The National Assembly of France, after the

defeat of the Prussian army, which attempted to carry into execution this horrible menace, threatened, in their turn, the governments of foreign countries by a promise of assisting insurgents who should aspire to overthrow their rulers. France proclaimed a Republic, and deposed the King.

In these critical circumstances, the policy put forth and repeatedly urged upon Parliament by Fox was consistent, rational, and prudent. He advised that England should mediate. The terms he proposed were, that the Allies should renounce all intention of interfering in the internal concerns of France. He thought that, on this condition, the decree of the 19th of November ought to be repealed. He thought that France ought to refrain from any aggression on her neighbours, and that the French Republic ought to be recognised. The navigation of the Scheldt and the indemnities for the German States ought, he was of opinion, to be made matters of compromise.

When, however, in the progress of hostilities, the Low Countries had been overrun by the French arms, Fox, quoting an opinion of De Witt, advised that no attempt should be made to recover Belgium, but that France should be bound not to attempt any further conquest.

On these terms, Fox thought that peace might have been preserved to Europe. In December, 1792, terms somewhat similar were sketched by Pitt in a despatch to the Court of Russia, but were never acted upon. Possibly neither the French Republic nor the Allies might at first have assented to a treaty of peace on these conditions. But, at all events, England would have declared a policy worthy of her fame, in conformity with international law, and the rights of independent nations.

For there is no principle of the Law of Nations more in-

disputable than the right of each nation to regulate its own internal government.

Fox was at the same time a strong supporter of the doctrine that England had an interest in all the concerns of the Continent — first, because it was for her benefit as a commercial nation, that the Continent should be in the enjoyment of peace, and next, because the overthrow of the balance of power would threaten her independence.

On questions of domestic policy, the opinions of Fox have for the most part been ratified by the decisions of Parliament; those which have not been will probably be confirmed by future events. Fox at an early period declared his opposition to the Test and Corporation Acts. Those acts have been repealed. He also condemned from the beginning to the end of his parliamentary life the disabilities imposed upon the Roman Catholics. Parliament, under the guidance of the Tory party, long maintained these disabilities, but in 1829 the long-desired relief was given.

The language of Fox on the subject of Ireland was always peculiarly strong and vehement; he, like Mr. Burke, detested the rule of a "miserable monopolizing minority." He hated the corruption and the intolerance of that *magnum latrocinium* which, having kept the Irish in bondage, goaded them into rebellion, in order to stifle their reasonable petitions and quench their rightful requests in blood. Not only Burke, not only Fox, not only Lord Fitzwilliam, not only Mr. Grattan, but that gallant and upright soldier, Sir Ralph Abercromby, who went to Ireland as commander-in-chief of the army, quite unconnected with any political party, saw, like Burke and Fox, the injustice of the existing tyranny. As a soldier, he could not avoid perceiving that the sway of military license was ruinous to the discipline of

the army.' As a man of sense and feeling, his mind revolted against the *magnum latrocinium.* Here is the impartial judgment which such a man formed of the state of Ireland in January, 1799: "Long observation has convinced me that all your misfortunes, that all the evils with which you are threatened, proceed from the illiberal, the unjust, and the unwise conduct of England. Your Legislature and your Executive Government partake, of course, of the vices flowing from the wretched system of English domination. The vices of the Government affect the manners of the people. If I find a peasantry cunning, deceitful, lazy, and vindictive, I cannot attribute it without impiety to the hand of God; it must come from the iron hand of man. Although the French Revolution and Jacobin principles may be the immediate cause of the events which have lately taken place in Ireland, yet the remote and ultimate cause must be derived from its true origin—the oppression of centuries. Do not imagine that I am weak enough to imagine that a few effusions of lenity or benevolence are to soften or subdue the minds of a people burdened by oppression; it will require the wisest system you can devise, and length of time, to effect it."* To the same purport was the reply of Fox in 1801 to those who alleged that the people of Ireland were disaffected.† Much has been done since 1801 to remove the oppression of centuries. But "the wisest system that can be devised" has still to be discovered.

The sum of the whole character of Fox as a statesman is, that he was an ardent, consistent, and thorough lover of liberty. Whether in France or in America, whether in Ireland or in England, whether with reference to the Protestant or the Roman Catholic, whether to be applied to

* "Memoirs of Sir R. Abercromby," p. 129. † See *ante*, p. 215.

the white or the black man, the main and ruling passion of Fox's life was a love of liberty. For her cause, he was an orator; for her cause, he was a statesman. He gave his life to the defence of English freedom; he hastened his death by his exertions to abolish the African slave trade.

Sir Walter Scott, wishing no doubt to do justice to Fox, has in fact cast a most undeserved reproach on his memory. He has written, as if in praise: "Record that Fox a Briton died," thus implying that, unless he supported the views of the Tory party against France, he was not worthy of the name of Briton. But the whole passage is beautiful:

"For talents mourn, untimely lost
When best employed and wanted most;
Mourn genius high, and lore profound,
And wit that loved to play, not wound;
And all the reasoning powers divine,
To penetrate, resolve, combine;
And feelings keen, and fancy's glow—
They sleep with him who sleeps below;
And if thou mourn'st, they could not save
From error him who owns this grave.
Be every harsher thought suppressed,
And sacred be the last long rest!
Here, where the end of earthly things
Lays heroes, patriots, bards, and kings;
Where stiff the hand and still the tongue
Of those who fought, and spoke, and sung;
Here, where the fretted aisles prolong
The distant notes of holy song,
As if some angel spoke again,
All peace on earth, good-will to men;
If ever from an English heart,
O here let prejudice depart,
And, partial feeling cast aside,
Record that Fox a Briton died!
When Europe crouched to France's yoke,
And Austria bent, and Prussia broke,
And the firm Russian's purpose brave
Was barter'd by a timorous slave,

E'en then dishonour's peace he spurned,
The sullied olive-branch returned,
Stood for his country's glory fast,
And nailed her colours to the mast."

It is evident that while Scott's purpose was *manibus dare lilia plenis*, his words imply that Fox was only a patriot when he rejected peace with France. This is a very low view of patriotism. Fox thought, in 1793 and 1803, that the name and reputation of England—and, with her name and reputation, her interest—would best be supported by an honest endeavour to continue in peace with France. It may be thought that he was wrong in opinion, and that Pitt was right. But those who think he was wrong ought to admit that, having ample means of judgment, he was right to act according to his convictions, and did not forfeit his character of a Briton on that account. Those who think he was right will ever revere him for defending the cause of humanity, justice, and peace, against a prevailing but unfounded clamour.

Among the occupations of Fox during the Secession, his mind was employed in writing a history of the Revolution of 1688. He did not give his whole time, nor did he give unremitting attention to this task: his business was politics; his pleasure was in Greek and Latin poetry. But he brought to the work an anxious spirit of inquiry, a large and enlightened judgment, and a love of truth and justice which ought, above all things, to animate the historian. An ancient writer, speaking of Sallust, censures him very justly for being rather a rhetorician than an historian. This fault Fox was anxious to avoid. He was solicitous to distinguish his work as much as possible from the fervid outpourings of the orator He left only a fragment, but in that fragment the reader may perceive the honesty of his research, and may observe,

not without admiration, how an intense love of freedom pierces through the severe simplicity of the style which he had adopted. Macaulay has since given to the world, in a work which posterity will admire and preserve, the complete history of the Revolution of 1688; but those who wish to learn how a great statesman judged the reigns of Charles II., and his brother James, will do well to study the fragment of Fox.

Fox opposed the first French war; he disapproved of the mode of commencing the second; but when once commenced, he only desired that it should be carried on with adequate means, and to a successful end.

Before concluding this work, therefore, it may be useful to mark, in a few pages, the vast difference in object, in spirit, and in result, between the first and the second revolutionary wars. In the first war, ended by the peace of Amiens, the sovereigns of Europe attempted to punish the French people for changing their constitution in a manner which those sovereigns did not approve. The attempt was made languidly and feebly; it was resisted by the French people with passion, with enthusiasm, with military skill, with political revolution. The peace of Amiens saw Europe at the feet of France.

In the second French war, a great military chief, created emperor, because in Roman fashion,

> "The conquering soldier, red with unfelt wounds,
> Salutes his general so——" *

attempted to model all the nations of Europe to his own standard. His motto was "Every thing should be done for the people; nothing by the people." Nations at the summit of civilization were denied, under pain of death, all freedom

* Dryden's "All for Love."

of thought and of expression; nations in the depth of ignorance were ordered to adopt, under the threat of conquest and military execution, the material changes made by the National Assembly at the outset of the French Revolution.

For several years, the unequalled talent of Napoleon, and the spirit of his admirable army, gave this scheme an apparent prospect of success: Hamburg was no longer German; Florence was no longer Italian; Austria was humbled; Prussia was prostrated. After a series of splendid victories, the Emperor Napoleon met the Emperor Alexander of Russia at Erfurt. In undisputed supremacy, they gave the Danubian Principalities to Russia, Spain to a brother of the Emperor of the French, and made, in their plenitude of power, other assignments of the territories of Europe. Thiers, the able historian, observes that none of the arrangements then made were finally carried into effect. How so? The Emperor Napoleon, after the peace of Tilsit, had more power than any sovereign had enjoyed since the decline of the Roman Empire. He had more genius for war, and greater talents for legislation and civil administration, than had been combined in any man since Julius Cæsar. But he had two wants: he wanted sympathy with human feelings, and he wanted moderation. He put to death the Duc d'Enghien without the slightest justification; he shot the bookseller Palm on a tyrant's plea. He thus raised against him the conscience of all the higher and middle classes of Europe. His want of moderation was equally flagrant. The extravagant design of sealing up the whole continent of Europe against English manufactures and commerce, the march of 600,000 men into Russia, betrayed the spirit of a gambler, rather than that of a sovereign and a statesman, and alarmed all nations. The first example of resistance, however, was given by Spain.

Spain had been from the time of the peace made by Godoy the humble instrument of France. But Napoleon, not contented with this vassalage, sought to degrade the Spanish nation, and to this degradation they refused to submit.

In Spain, the whole power of administration had been in the hands of Godoy. At his crowded levées were to be seen the highest ecclesiastics and the most infamous harlots. The patronage of the State was sold to the highest bidder; office and rank, the honour of women, and the dignities of the Church, were the subjects of a disgraceful barter.

The monopoly of land in the hands of the Church and the aristocracy; the frivolous habits of the grandees; the declining state of the army and navy; the absence of all spirit, of all life, of all integrity, in the Court and the governing classes made Spain apparently a ready victim or a hopeful pupil. Napoleon determined to introduce into Spain what the French call the principles of 1789—to abolish the monopoly of land, to divide the estates of the clergy and the nobility, to put an end to religious intolerance and civil disability.

But with these improvements he coupled the deposition of the reigning family, and taking advantage of a popular outbreak, and a dispute between the King and the Prince of Asturias, he summoned these two worthless rivals to Bayonne, where he forced them both to abdicate, and caused his brother Joseph to be acknowledged King of Spain by a body of mock representatives of that country.

Thus far successful, and having a French garrison at Madrid, under the command of Joachim Murat, his brother-in-law, he ordered, without a doubt of his orders being at once obeyed, that the rest of the Royal Family should be sent to Bayonne. But Napoleon knew nothing of the character of the Spanish nation. The surface of the ground was

tainted, but the deep soil beneath was rich in virtue, strong in pride, fertile in patriotic sentiment. Thus, when the mules were harnessed to the royal carriages, the people of Madrid broke out at once into a desperate, hopeless, but heroic resistance. The names of Daoiz and Valverde, two officers of artillery, who lost their lives in the combat of the 2nd of May, are preserved in the grateful memory of the Spanish people. The news of this unsuccessful resistance, and of the military executions which followed it, was carried, as it were, by an electric shock, over the whole of Spain, and everywhere inspired a similar spirit.

The Spaniards knew nothing of the forces of the Emperor Napoleon; they cared nothing for Charles IV. and his rebellious son; but they felt that their independence as a nation was menaced, and they determined to rise in its defence. The war which was carried on by virtue of this determination was of the most cruel, the most ferocious, the most fanatical nature.

If a French soldier lay down to assuage his thirst by a drink of water from a well, he was thrown head foremost to the bottom by the woman who showed him where he might find water. If a Frenchman straggled from his regiment on the road, he was cut off by the peasantry, and hung by the road-side. If he joined his companions at a wine-house in the evening, he ran a risk of having his throat cut, and being thrown into the nearest river. If an officer was quartered in a village, he could only defend himself by putting out sentinels and erecting barricades. If he made a march with a few companions, he might be cut off by a guerilla informed of his route, and of the passes where he might be surprised.

Such was the remorseless war of the Spanish people against their invaders. In this manner, the 300,000 soldiers

of Napoleon were reduced to a number which the genius of Wellington was able to meet, to vanquish, and to expel.

The Russians bore invasion with scarcely more calmness than the Spaniards; the people resented the attempt to subdue them, and their national spirit drove out the great host which reached Moscow only to leave it. Animated by their example, the Germans, the Dutch, and the Italians vindicated their nationality, and Europe was saved from conquest and servile dependence. But in the second French War, as in the first, it was proved that lavish subsidies to Austria and Prussia, unaided by popular enthusiasm, bought only defeat and humiliation, while the rapid and effective equipment of British fleets was rewarded by the victory of Trafalgar and the undisputed supremacy of the seas for the remainder of the war.

Thus, in the first war, the French nation had defeated the kings of Europe; in the second, the nations of Europe defeated the Emperor of the French. But in neither case did France and the nations of Europe obtain liberty. France, in the first war, fell into anarchy, and then embraced despotism as a refuge. After the close of the second, the monarchs assembled at Vienna combined to deprive their subjects of that freedom to which they were so justly entitled. Half a century has since elapsed, but a love of liberty and a spirit of moderation are still required to secure to Europe the enjoyment of order, freedom, and peace.

THE END.

LONDON: PRINTED BY WILLIAM CLOWES AND SONS, STAMFORD STREET AND CHARING CROSS.

Digitized with financial assistance from

HT Parekh FOUNDATION

An Initiative by HDFC WITH YOU, RIGHT THROUGH

on 27 November, 2018